-L Times
1. IX. 30

# L'AIGLON

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Sir David Hunter Blair is correct in his conjecture that my grandmother, Lady Burghersh, would have been able to say what l'Aiglon was really like. During her residence in Florence from 1815 to 1830 she was a great friend of his mother, the Empress Marie Louise, who left her in her will a portrait of l'Aiglon set in an amber box which had been the gift of Napoleon, and also gave her a lock of his hair. These, which are now in my possession, show him as very fair, with penetrating eyes and prominent forehead. In fact, the likeness to his father is very striking.

Yours faithfully,

RACHEL WEIGALL.

20, West Cliff-terrace, Ramsgate, Aug. 27.

the above is a photo-graph of the box referred to given to me by Miss Weigall

# WOULD-BE BODY SNATCHERS

## A FANTASTIC PLOT

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

VIENNA, Nov. 11

A plan to steal the body of the Duke of Reichstadt, the son of Napoleon I., and sell it to the French Government has been revealed to the Vienna police by the six members of a gang of youthful unemployed who are under arrest on a charge of robbing a bank messenger last Thursday of 13,000 schillings (about £375).

According to their tale, the conspirators had ascertained that a subterranean passage led from an adjoining street under the vault in the Vienna Capucian Monastery, in which the bodies of 137 Hapsburg rulers and members of their families are preserved, among them that of the young Napoleon. The prior of the monastery this afternoon declared that he could not see how the youths could have bored through the hard floor of the crypt or, having gained access to the crypt, how they could have prised open the massive bronze sarcophagi. The youths, however, state that they had already loosened some bricks in the floor of the vault, and intended to transfer the embalmed body to a wooden chest, which was to be drawn up to the street through one of the skylights and then transferred to a waiting motor-car. They were aware, they say, that the French Government had been negotiating in vain with the monks for the cession of the duke's body as recently as last summer.

In police quarters it is thought that the youths, none of whom is above 20, were merely vain-glorious, and would certainly have failed in their plans. The Mail. 12.xi.29

# From The Times of 1832

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1832. Price 7d.

Yesterday ten print-sellers were brought before a jury [in Paris] for exposing to sale various lithographic and other portraits of the Duke of Reichstadt [Napoleon's son], thereby encouraging a spirit of rebellion, and tending to disturb the public peace, more particularly by the emblems engraved beneath them; amongst which the Advocate-General pointed out an eagle, holding in one of his claws a sword, with the other grasping a globe on which was inscribed "France," at the same time turning the head towards the Prince, and presenting to him a laurelled crown. The prisoners protested that they were free from all evil intentions, and conceived that, since the revolution of July, they were at liberty to sell the portrait of the young Duke. The jury were of the same opinion, and delivered a verdict of acquittal, and the Court ordered the prints to be delivered up to their respective owners.—*Galignani's Messenger.*

# TO STEAL NAPOLEON'S SON'S BODY.

## SALE TO FRANCE PLANNED.

An extraordinary plot on the part of six Vienna lads is revealed in a Reuter telegram from the Austrian capital.

They were arrested recently on charges of stealing a motor-car and robbing a bank messenger of a large sum.

But they have now confessed that they were planning to break into the Capuchin Church and steal the body of the son of Napoleon I., the Duke of Reichstadt, with a view of smuggling it abroad and selling it to the French Government.

Exactly how they proposed to break into the gloomy vaults of this famous church, the burial-place of many generations of Habsburgs, is not revealed.

The Duke of Reichstadt was the son of Napoleon I. by his second wife, Marie Louise of Austria, and was born in Paris in 1811. He was at once proclaimed King of Rome, and after the abdication of his father, following on Waterloo, was recognised by the Chambers as the Emperor Napoleon II.

But his was only a nominal sovereignty, and the little boy was taken by his mother to Vienna, where, under the title of Duke of Reichstadt, he lived with his grandfather, the Emperor Francis II., at the Palace of Schoenbrunn.

The young Duke, who died in 1832, eleven years after his famous father, figures in Edmond Rostand's play "L'Aiglon" (The Eagle's Son). The Daily Telegraph. 12.xi.29

# L'AIGLON

The Times. 12. XII. 32.

## PROPOSED RETURN TO FRANCE

## INTERMENT IN THE INVALIDES

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

PARIS, DEC. 11

Only one point remains to be settled to determine the translation of the remains of the Duke of Reichstadt from Vienna to the Invalides, and the committee in charge of the celebrations in honour of the centenary of the Duke's death which has conducted the negotiations is confident that the ceremony will be performed on May 5, the annniversary of the death of the Emperor Napoleon I. in 1821. The first step towards the realization of one of the most cherished hopes of the Bonapartists was to obtain the consent of the Empress Zita on behalf of the head of the House of Hapsburg. This was successfully arranged last June, and at the same time the Austrian Government gave the assurance that no administrative difficulties would arise and that military honours would be rendered at the moment of the removal of the body from Vienna.

Prince Murat, the president of the Centenary Committee, then approached M. de Monzie, the Minister of Education, to know whether permission to place the body in the Invalides could be obtained by decree, or whether a special Bill would have to be passed by Parliament. If a Bill was required the committee, foreseeing delay and wishing to avoid a public debate on so delicate a subject, was prepared to abandon its project. Legal opinion upon this point appears to be at variance, but the last and most authoritative source to be consulted holds that a simple decree will suffice and that no special Bill need be presented. As soon as this has been confirmed the committee will proceed with its arrangements for the transference of the body.

The remains will be brought by train from Vienna to the Gare des Invalides in Paris, where military honours will be rendered as to a Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour. After a Requiem Mass in the Church of Saint Louis des Invalides the sarcophagus, which is of bronze, will be laid at the feet of the porphyry sarcophagus in which lies the body of the Emperor Napoleon I. The inscription placed on the Duke's sarcophagus at the time of his funeral [in which the Prince is described as having been King of Rome, Emperor, as Napoleon II., and Duke of Reichstadt in turn] will, it is stated, be changed for one more in accordance with French sentiment.

# NAPOLEON II ASHES IN AIRPLANE.

## PLAN TO GIVE AUSTRIA CREDIT IF SHE RETURNS THEM.

From Our Own Correspondent.

PARIS, Wednesday.

Further financial aid to Austria in exchange for permission to transfer the ashes of Napoleon II. from Vienna to a permanent resting place beside the tomb of his father in the Invalides is being discussed by Napoleonic admirers.

The idea is to grant Austria credits first and then resume diplomatic conversations on the question.

It is hoped the ashes can be brought to Paris on the wings of an airplane, piloted, if possible, by the famous airman Dieudonne Coste, because Napoleon II., who died at the age of 21, was dubbed "l'Aiglon," or "Eaglet," and immortalised under that name by Sarah Bernhardt in the title rôle of Edmond Rostand's play.

The airplane would retrace the road taken by Empress Marie-José when she returned to Austria.—International News Service.

The Evening Standard, 25. xi. 31.

## "KING OF ROME."

### Remains of Napoleon II. May Be Taken to France.

PARIS, Thursday.

Authorities are again to discuss the transferring of the remains of Napoleon II., son of the famous Emperor, King of Rome and Duke of Reichstadt, from the Imperial tomb in Vienna to France.

Austria, which never seemed willing to agree to the transfer, may now consent, it is thought.

Napoleon II. died on July 22, 1832, and it is suggested that an imposing ceremony for the reception of the remains in France might be arranged for the centenary of his death next year.—Central News.

The Evening Standard. 29.x.31

## CLAIM TO REMAINS OF NAPOLEON'S SON

*From Our Own Correspondent*

VIENNA, Sunday.

Opposition is growing in Austria to the proposal, now approved by the ex-Empress Zita, for the removal from Vienna to Paris of the remains of the Duke of Reichstadt, son of Napoleon, who made him King of Rome.

The duke, who was born in Paris in 1811, was buried in the Hapsburg family vault under the Capuchin Church at Vienna in 1832.

Thousands of people visit the Capuchin crypt every year and ask to see the sarcophagus of the Duke of Reichstadt, who is the central figure in Rostand's play "L'Aiglon" ("The Young Eagle"), in which Sarah Bernhardt achieved one of her greatest successes.

For many years French people have desired that the duke's remains should rest near his father's in the Invalides. The Austrian Government has raised no objection to the removal.

The sarcophagus weighs a ton and a half, and it does not contain all the remains. The duke's heart is in a silver casket in the Loretto Chapel of the Augustiner Church, in the Hofburg, and parts of other organs are in the Cathedral of St. Stephen.

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The Times

## Napoleon's Son

6 Dec. 1932.

All who know the history of NAPOLEON'S son must have felt a thrill of pleasure at the news of the proposal that his body should lie, at last, beside that of his father under the dome of the Invalides. NAPOLEON FRANCIS, called the KING of ROME, then NAPOLEON II., then PRINCE of PARMA, and last of all DUKE of REICHSTADT, deserved that this honour should be paid him. For, in a world bitterly hostile to all that his father represented, he made himself his father's champion and advocate without at the same time doing violence in any way to the love in which he held his mother, the ARCHDUCHESS MARIE LOUISE, and her people. His story possesses a quality of magic which rescues it from tragedy. When his father clasped him in his arms on a January night of the year 1814, before leaving Paris to fight his losing campaign against the Allies, he was not yet three years old. He never saw his father again. Within a few months he had gone with his mother to live at the palace of Schoenbrunn at Vienna as a member of the House of Hapsburg. His grandfather, the EMPEROR FRANCIS, and PRINCE METTERNICH were his guardians, and since both of them believed that NAPOLEON was a spirit of evil banished from power by Heaven itself, every effort which human ingenuity could suggest was spent to blot his father's name from his memory. He ceased to be able to understand the French language; he lived and thought as an Austrian prince; he wore the uniform of the Austrian Army; Vienna was his home and the people of Vienna were his friends. And yet almost with his last breath he bore witness to his love of France and to his devotion to his father. "All the Duke's thoughts," wrote MARMONT, NAPOLEON'S old Marshal, who met him in Vienna, "turn towards his father, whom "he literally worships."

over

How NAPOLEON FRANCIS found his father and came to love him has often been told. But the story bears re-telling, because it illustrates not only the strength of heredity in human affairs but also the feebleness of a system of education undertaken in defiance of human nature. The mistake into which METTERNICH and his master fell was that of forgetting that a boy will not willingly be robbed of his father on any consideration whatever. The more NAPOLEON was hidden the more eager his son became to know him. The spirit of his father, which he had inherited, supplied the means. Thus, when MARIE LOUISE came on one occasion to see her boy, she found him playing Robinson Crusoe in a hut in the garden, and with anxious misgiving perceived that another island and another hero were in his thoughts. It was not, however, until the news of NAPOLEON'S death reached Vienna and was communicated to his son that the full extent of the failure of METTERNICH'S plan became apparent. NAPOLEON FRANCIS, now ten years of age, flung himself down in a passion of tears and refused during many days to be comforted. From that time his whole life was directed to preparing himself for the task which had been bequeathed to him from St. Helena and which, as he believed, he would be called upon one day to perform. One of his last letters to his mother, written while at twenty-one years of age he lay dying of consumption, remains to attest his faith: —"For the "sake of mankind I must somehow or other get "over my weakness," he wrote; "I must fulfil "my destiny. With so much to do, is it to be "believed that I shall not recover?" A companion of this last year was the future EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH, then a child of two. FRANCIS JOSEPH long afterwards refused the request of NAPOLEON III. that the body of NAPOLEON FRANCIS might be brought to Paris.

# NAPOLEON'S SON

The King of Rome

# NAPOLEON'S SON

BY

CLARA TSCHUDI

*Author of*
*"Marie Antoinette," "Eugénie, Empress of the French," "Maria Sophia, Queen of Naples," "Napoleon's Mother," "Ludwig the Second, King of Bavaria," etc., etc.*

*AUTHORISED TRANSLATION FROM THE NORWEGIAN*

BY

E. M. COPE

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## PREFACE

It is just a hundred years since the birth of the only legitimate son of the great Napoleon.

Poets have sung his praises, novelists and dramatists have used him as the central figure of their works, and he is the subject of many historical studies. Victor Hugo has rendered the King of Rome immortal; François Coppée and Béranger have composed popular songs in his praise; Alexandre Dumas, Balzac, Eugène Sue and Louise Mühlbach have made him the hero of their romances, while Welschinger and Wertheimer have also interested themselves with his fate.

The curtain of the nineteenth century rose with applause for Napoleon I., and as it fell, before the close, we saw the resurrection of the King of Rome in Sarah Bernhardt's rendering of the scenes in Rostand's *L'Aiglon.*

If Napoleon I. was the most remarkable man of the last century, his son was certainly one of the most unfortunate children in its annals. His short life may be divided into two parts: the brilliant time in France during three

years, and his captivity in Vienna, lasting till death.

Providence, who denied him the renown he longed for in the history of wars, did not withhold a share in the daily strife of existence: the high honours that marked his birth; his flight and banishment from France; his life in Austria; the hopes that clung to his name; his illusions and disappointments; his painful illness and desertion in death — truly furnish contrasts enough in one human life.

Napoleon's son was not only King of Rome; from 23rd June to 3rd July 1815 he was Emperor of France. He was Prince of Parma and Duke of Reichstadt; he was also called "Le Fils de l'Homme," and "L'Aiglon."

The story of the young French eagle who, mentally and bodily, came to grief in the Imperial castle of Vienna, has been touched up in many ways, for, as he was rarely seen but from a distance, it was easy to be mistaken in him, libellous reports were spread, and his actions misrepresented enough, to make him an object of hatred.

I have tried to show him as he was with his friend, a pure and gifted youth, who promised to become a worthy son of a great father.

Of all the characters that I have depicted, I

have had no greater esteem for any than for Napoleon's mother, nor have I had greater compassion for any than for Napoleon's son.

I earnestly hope that those who read my book may feel somewhat of the emotion that stirred me while I wrote it.

CLARA TSCHUDI.

CHRISTIANIA, *November* 1911.

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# PART I

Ce n'est pas une cause,
Que j'attaque ou que je défend
Et ceci n'est pas autre chose
Que l'histoire d'un pauvre enfant.

EDMOND ROSTAND.

# NAPOLEON'S SON

## CHAPTER

### Napoleon in Vienna, 1809

THE Emperor Napoleon was holding his court at Schönbrunn, and no effort had hitherto availed to dislodge him. It was just after the battle of Wagram, and Austria had begged for a truce from the powerful French Emperor, who utilised the period of negotiation to inspect his troops and hold a general review, 12th October 1809, at which many hundred spectators were present, in order to see their enemy.

As Napoleon was crossing the Square, a young German, mumbling broken sentences in French, came close up to him, but neither the Emperor nor his adjutant could grasp what he was saying, and General Rapp, who took him for an intruder, eager to ask a favour, ordered him to be removed. But at the close of the review, the young man appeared again, apparently feeling in his breast pocket for some petition, as he muttered indistinct words, still in French. He was ordered to go, and as an officer was taking him by the arm, he was conscious that the German had some hard substance in his pocket,

which, on examination, proved to be a well-sharpened table knife.

The discovery was made known to Napoleon.

" This child can never have meant to kill me," he exclaimed, but when the murderous weapon was shown to him, he sent for the young fellow, when it was found that he was the seventeen-year-old son of a priest, that his name was Friedrich Staps, that he was a student, and had recently served as an apprentice in Erfurt.

General Rapp was ordered to inquire, in the name of the Emperor, with what object he was carrying the knife.

" I wished to kill you, Sire," was the reply.

" Have you ever seen me before ? "

" Yes, in Erfurt, and I have sworn to kill you, for there can be no peace for Germany while you live."

" Who inspired you with the thought of killing me ? "

" My conscience and my devotion to the Fatherland commanded me to do so."

" Did you not know how dangerous it would be for yourself ? "

" Yes ; but I look upon it as a blessing to die for my country ! "

" Is this the kind of teaching in the schools you attended ? "

" Many Germans are of the same way of thinking as I am."

" What would you do if I were to pardon you,

on the ground of your youth and your distorted views ? "

" If you will not restore liberty to Germany, I shall try to kill you the very next chance."

Napoleon gave his physician a sign that he should examine the young man, but nothing remarkable was discovered ; hatred—not madness—shone in his eyes. He was tried by a court-martial, and condemned to death.

Peace between Austria and France was signed, 13th October, when the former had to submit to the most humiliating conditions, and twenty-four hours after the guns had announced the Peace, a shot was heard from the plain between Vienna and Schönbrunn, while volleys of musketry told that the sentence on Friedrich Staps had been carried out.

Before returning to his own capital, Napoleon descended by torchlight into the vaults of the Habsburgs ; and as he stood in thought and silence by the coffin of Maria Theresa, he recalled that his star had never shone with brighter lustre than after his victory at Wagram, which seemed to make him master both of the present and the future.

There was no presentiment to whisper to him that the dust of his own son would find a home in the vaults of the Austrian Emperors.

## CHAPTER II

Napoleon's Divorce from the Empress Josephine—Marie Louise selected as Empress

"WHAT remarks are made about me in the far-away parts of my Empire?" asked Napoleon of one of his courtiers, who replied:

"Sire, some say that you are a god, others that you are a devil; but all agree that you are more than a man!"

Those who hated him admired him all the same, and Europe's monarchs treated him with respect, as though he were not merely their equal, but their superior. There was no court to equal his in grandeur, and he spoke and acted as though he had always been an Imperial Majesty.

And yet, outer forms that he had borrowed from the old kings were not suffered to wipe out the recollection that the power of the little Corsican had its origin in the Great Revolution. In spite of the democratic views which became evident on several occasions, he had a weakness for the old aristocracy; and, although he affirmed that *his* nobility dated from the battle of Marengo, he was none the less proud that his ancestors belonged to a noble stock.

He had returned to Paris immediately after

the conclusion of peace at Vienna—to realise that he had no child by Josephine, that he longed for an heir to his throne, as well as a union with an old ruling house.

Some of his ministers had again and again advised him to sacrifice his domestic happiness in order to assure the future of his dynasty. But the man who, without the shadow of a qualm, had seen thousands die on the field of battle was overcome with emotion at the thought of grieving Josephine, for he loved her ; and it was not till after Wagram and his residence at Schönbrunn that his resolve to divorce her took definite shape.

The charming " Citoyenne Bonaparte " shone in the eyes of the people with all the brilliancy of the Republic, the Consulate and the Empire, while the army looked upon her as a higher being—the companion, as it were, of Napoleon, in his early victories.

He had overturned states, founded kingdoms, converted a republic into an Empire—nothing had stopped his course, and France had not blamed him ! But the displeasure of the nation was evident enough when a divorce was mooted, and " This will bring him no luck " was heard on all sides.

Josephine had never aspired to Majesty ; her highest aim was to be loved as a woman, and when success forsook Napoleon, the army bewailed aloud that he had divorced " the old

one." After a defeat, they exclaimed: "He ought to have kept Josephine ; she was his good star ! " And the Empress herself was always convinced that she brought good luck to his troops.

Though many libels were expressed and written against her, posterity has cherished her memory ; and, in spite of divorce, she retained a warm place in the heart of Napoleon.

It was two months after the declaration of peace in Vienna when the Emperor announced, in a meeting, consisting of his wife, his mother, his stepchildren, Eugène and Hortense, his brothers and sisters, and the chancellors of the Empire, that "as he had no hope of children by his beloved wife he had decided to dissolve his marriage, and enter into a fresh connection."

In spite of her despair, the Empress struggled hard to bear her grief and maintain her dignity, but when the moment came for her to read her consent aloud, she trembled violently, the paper fell from her hand, and she exclaimed :

" You see a wretched woman—this divorce is killing me—do what you please—I submit to all ! "

Her son picked up the paper and gave it to her ; then she handed it to the Chancellor, who read it aloud to the sorrowing audience ; for even the Emperor's mother, brothers and sisters were in tears, although it was they who had contributed to her downfall.

On 8th February 1810, the Austrian ambas-

sador in Paris announced to his Government that the French Emperor had expressed the wish to marry the Archduchess Marie Louise, adding: "I am quite sure that *I* pity her."

Again and again Napoleon had driven the Emperor Francis II. from his capital, and his wife contracted her last illness on their flight; while, in order to save the residue of his defeated army, the descendants of the Habsburgs had reluctantly asked for a meeting after Austerlitz; and, although the Corsican victor was extremely polite and genial towards him, the humiliation was keen.

"At last I have seen him, and I cannot bear him," he remarked to one of his friends. "He has a fine head, but he looks like a tailor!"

His wife compared her future son-in-law with "Antichrist" and the beast in the Revelation of St John.

The people said that it was an unheard-of thing that one of their archduchesses should marry their born enemy, and refused to credit the rumour. In France, the Netherlands, Italy and in the states of the Confederation of the Rhine, the new marriage of the Emperor was the one topic of conversation for weeks, and there was not a royal house in Europe, nor an aristocratic family, that did not feel the deepest sympathy with the young princess. But, again, every class of society was amazed that she should consent to occupy a throne which had been

reared so close to a scaffold, from which had flowed the blood of her Aunt.

Marie Louise was the last to learn the news that she was to be married to Napoleon, who had persecuted and conquered her father, who had robbed her grandmother—the Queen of Naples—of crown and land, and who had almost caused the death of her own mother.

In the family circle he was always mentioned with a shudder ; and, phlegmatic as the girl was, she must have wished, more than once, that a ball would find its mark in him. Playing at soldiers had been the delight of the nurseries in the Hofburg and Schönbrunn, when the ugliest of the toy men was chosen to represent " that wicked Bonaparte." The princesses flogged him, ran pins into him, and, on one occasion, a boy, having burnt his sister's doll, shouted in triumph that he had roasted Napoleon alive !

Her father dared not tell her the fate that was awaiting her ; but it seems that, shortly after the divorce from Josephine had taken place, an outsider must have hinted to her that she was chosen to be Empress, for she wrote thus to her friend, Victoria von Poutet :

" Each time I open a copy of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, I expect to see the name of Napoleon's new consort, and I confess that the delay causes me much anxiety, though I place my fate in the hands of God. What a misfortune it will be if I am chosen to sacrifice myself for the good of

the State, although I am convinced that true happiness can only be found in the path of duty, even at the expense of one's own inclinations. But I will think no more about it! If it must be thus, my resolve is taken to offer the doubly painful sacrifice. Pray for me, that it may not be!"

The strongest traits in the character of Marie Louise were her devotion to her father and her ever-yielding obedience to him. She vowed not to oppose his wishes, and when one of her uncles expressed his fears as to the marriage, as well as to the evil she had heard of Napoleon, the archduchess calmly rejoined:

"It is all true, when he was our enemy, but that time is gone by!"

## CHAPTER III

### The New Empress arrives in France—Wedding Festivities

BERTHIER had been sent to Vienna to ask for the hand of Marie Louise in the name of the Emperor, having previously dropped his proud title of " Duke of Wagram," which would have roused bitter recollections at the Austrian court. Up to the very last minute before his arrival, workmen were busy repairing the roads and bridges, which the French had utterly ruined during the war.

The Marshal handed the portrait of his sovereign, set in diamonds, to the archduchess, then fastened it on her dress; three days later, she was married by proxy, the Archduke Charles representing Napoleon.

The bride's mother was dead, and the Emperor had recently married a connection, Maria Ludovica d'Este, who hated Bonaparte with all her heart, and the union was so repulsive that she could not force herself to accompany her stepdaughter to the carriage, but fainted as she drove away.

At each halt on the journey, Marie Louise wrote long letters to her father, and repeatedly assured him that she was seeking peace in the consciousness that she was fulfilling her duty.

"I beg you to write diligently to me, best of fathers," she wrote, "and to rest assured that I will do my utmost to bring about the comfort that you expect from me."

It was in Strassburg that she received her first greetings from the home in which her thoughts were lingering; and it was here that her modest behaviour charmed the population; and her correct knowledge of the French tongue was all in her favour.

Every paper was filled with minute details as to the wedding. First, as to its political importance and the advent of the Emperor's daughter in France, as a pledge of unity between the two most powerful opponents of the Continent. The astronomer Meissier recalled a comet seen three days after the birth of Marie Louise; and, at the same time, alluded to the comet that appeared when Napoleon was born.

Poets tuned their harps, and the future Empress was praised in high-flown verse in French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. One writer carried his enthusiasm so far as to compare her with the Virgin. "Of these two queens," he said, "one reigns in heaven, the other on earth!"

Napoleon had resolved that the magnificence displayed at his wedding should surpass anything that had hitherto been seen at his court. He commanded all the princes and princesses of his house to betake themselves to Paris, and

ordered every petty detail as to the reception of Marie Louise on her arrival. His sisters and sisters-in-law were to bear her train at the ceremony—performed by his mother's half-brother, Cardinal Fesch—and this roused their wrath to such a pitch that Madame Letitia Bonaparte had to use her maternal authority, in order to soothe their troubled minds.

Magnificent *fêtes* were in prospect, including illuminations and fireworks; all the fountains were to run with wine, and the theatres were to produce their most striking representations. Numberless pardons were granted, and the Emperor scattered orders and gold in every direction.

But the multitude, who loved their former Empress, were disgusted to find that they must be yoked to the triumphal car of Marie Louise, and these implacable republicans assisted in the preparations with bitter thoughts—while some among the old nobility circulated a caustic poem deriding the union.

. . . . . .

The Emperor was ready to set off in accordance with the ceremonies he himself had arranged, and the moment he was told that his bride had left Rheims, he threw a cloak over his gala uniform and started, in order to surprise her *en route*.

While she was changing horses at a little roadside station, two officers issued from the gateway,

and the equerry, who recognised his master, tore open the carriage door, shouting: "His Majesty!"

The Emperor entered, embraced the terrified Marie Louise, and, in a wild whirl, the couple rapidly reached Compiègne, where the decorations were barely complete.

Cannon thundered from far and near, generals and admirals sprang to horse, in order to meet the Imperial pair on the historical bridge where Louis XV. had welcomed Marie Antoinette of Austria.

The marriage contract of the present couple was word for word the same as that of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. It was signed in the hall, at St Cloud, where Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor.

The court left for Paris on the morning of Sunday, 2nd April 1810, when full sunshine had replaced many days of rain.

The procession went through the Bois de Boulogne, through L'Arc de Triomphe, and La Place du Carrousel, on to the Tuileries, the Imperial couple in a gilt gala coach drawn by eight Andalusian horses. Then came thirty equipages, in which were kings and queens, princes and princesses, with their retinue; marshals and generals, in front and behind the chief carriage, with the guards lining the way.

And these were the only ones who greeted their leader with enthusiasm; for the Parisians,

who recalled the charm of Josephine, and, too, were almost tired of shows, looked on with curiosity, but no delight.

" I have spoilt these Parisians, offering them so many unexpected sights ; they would have expressed no surprise if I had married the Virgin Mary herself ! " exclaimed Napoleon testily.

The procession was approaching the awful spot where, but eighteen years previously, beasts had turned restive, as they had to cross the blood-reeking place.

Salvos of artillery, music, flowers and trumpets could not overcome the horror of Marie Louise as she thought of the fifteen hundred heads that fell on that spot.

It was sixteen years since Marie Antoinette had finally left the Tuileries, to perish at last by the guillotine, while from the same terrace, where the young Empress now saw none but smiling faces, a cruel throng had rejoiced over the sorrow they were preparing for the unfortunate queen, her own near relation, both on her father's and her mother's side.[1]

[1] Marie Louise's father was Maria Theresa's grandson (son's son), and her mother was her granddaughter (daughter's daughter).

Napoleon and Marie Louise in St. Cloud

## CHAPTER IV

### Prince Schwarzenberg's Fête—Honeymoon

THE wedding festivities terminated with a large ball given by the Austrian minister, Prince Schwarzenberg; but, as his rooms could not accommodate the two thousand guests whom he had invited, he had hired an adjoining building, and at the same time constructed an enormous ballroom, attached to the main building by a gallery, both of which were covered with linen on the outside, and lined with gauze and pink silk. The walls had huge garlands of flowers, lamps and mirrors; curtains draped both sides of doors and windows; candelabra hung from the roof, and—to accomplish all this in time—many hundred workers had toiled day and night for weeks.

The summer was unusually warm, boards and beams were already dry, trees and bushes in the park were longing for rain, and the flowers that were to be used at the *fête* had to be constantly watched and watered.

On Sunday, 1st July, these magnificent rooms were crowded with men and women of the highest rank in the capital, including a large number of strangers; the Imperial couple had arrived, and dancing was in full swing.

Marie Louise had just taken her seat, and Napoleon was at the other end of the room, chatting in the highest of spirits, when suddenly a current of air drove one of the flickering lights of the candelabra too near to some drapery, which caught fire.

Two gentlemen, who were standing near, were ready in a trice to extinguish the first flames, but still the fire spread, clouds of smoke filled the ballroom, the music ceased, and screams, or voices calling for help, were heard on all sides.

The Imperial couple had a narrow escape. Napoleon hastened to the rescue of his wife; and after seeing her in safety at home he returned to the minister's house, to render assistance in getting the flames under. It was a terrible sight that met him: men seeking for their wives, parents looking for their children, hundreds of people on the ground, some trampled to death. And in the midst of all this misery, crowds of the dregs of the capital had made their way into the grounds and robbed guests of their ornaments. A quarter of an hour sufficed to destroy the whole building.

The loss of diamonds and other valuables was reckoned at many millions—but infinitely worse, of course, was the realisation of the awful loss of human life. Among the dead was Princess Schwarzenberg, the minister's sister-in-law, who had rushed into the flames to seek her daughter,

and many other members of the highest aristocracy.

The event made the deepest impression, not only in Paris, but abroad. Most people looked upon this " night of terror " as a fearful warning for the Emperor's new marriage, and the occurrence awoke recollections of a similar misfortune which had cast a shadow over the bridal festivities of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

Marie Louise soon felt at ease in her new position, and her husband did all in his power to smooth her path, so that a few days after the wedding she was able to write to her father that she was perfectly happy.

" I am nearly always with the Emperor," she wrote. " I am grateful to him, and heartily appreciate his devotion."

Then, a few days later, she reiterated :

" I assure you, dearest papa, that your prophecy is being fulfilled. I am as happy as you foretold I should be ! "

Napoleon had never altered his bachelor habits, and his first wife had been content with what suited him ; both belonged to the nobility, and yet they were the children of the French Revolution.

It was far otherwise with Marie Louise ! Although she was a descendant of the old German Empire, she was an absolute child in experience of the world, in comparison with her predecessor. Her train of thought and her manners had all

the interest of novelty for him ; he submitted to her will, and was eager that the world should hear of their idyllic union.

When the Austrian minister, Metternich, was in Paris, he once said to him :

" Tell the Emperor that his daughter is the best gift that he could have sent me ! " He repeated again and again that he had always longed for a home, and that now his dream was fulfilled.

In former days he had dined alone, and in haste ; now it was with his wife, who liked to linger at the meal, with its daily seven or eight courses. But Napoleon remained with her, though his ministers were waiting for him ; and, although those seeking an audience were dismissed, he still showed not the least impatience.

Towards the end of lunch, he would inquire if the Empress wished to go out, and then stand ready and waiting for her at the hour she had named. He spent the evening with her, playing billiards or reversi.

To please her, he took lessons in dancing, and arranged balls and theatricals to amuse her ; these latter being no longer plays, that he enjoyed, but simple little comedies, suited to the mental capacities of the Empress.

When the cold weather came on, Napoleon ordered a wood fire for the evening, but his wife would not have it, and asked him to accompany her to her private apartment, which he said would be too warm for him.

She had not much sense, but sufficient to understand how good and patient he was with her; and on one occasion she remarked to Metternich:

"I feel certain that they think in Vienna I live in daily anxiety, but I am not in the least afraid of Napoleon—in fact, I begin to think that he is afraid of me."

It was even reported in Austria that she was so deeply in love with him that she could not bear to spend an hour away from his side. All her letters were filled with expressions of devotion and thankfulness towards him. Once again she wrote to the Emperor Francis:

"I can but repeat to you how contented and happy I am, and I feel certain that it will always be thus! You could only grasp my meaning if you knew the Emperor personally. You would understand how tender he is towards his family, and how genuine he is at heart. Then I am confident you would appreciate him."

Metternich also wrote to his master:

"Her Majesty the Empress is always in the company of her husband, and the agreement between them could not be better."

Towards the end of September the minister was recalled to Vienna, when he emphasised, by word of mouth, both that the relations between the two Emperors had become much more friendly than they had formerly been, and that the young Empress was happy.

Marie Louise, now in her twentieth year, had dark chestnut hair, with expressionless blue eyes; her complexion was fresh, perhaps too red, and her thick lips reminded one that she belonged to the Habsburg dynasty.

Before the wedding, the French ambassador in Vienna had written of her:

"The Parisians will take to the new Empress: she is not handsome, but she has a good figure; and when she is in full dress, with her ornaments, she looks fairly well!"

She was cultivated and a good linguist. She drew and painted nicely, and played the piano and harp better than princesses in general.

At home her brightness and cheerfulness were irresistible, but in society she was nervous and embarrassed, going the round of the different drawing-rooms like a doll on wires. The Emperor was generally by her side, whispering what she should say to such and such guests, to whom he wished her to be agreeable.

Most of the ladies of the court found her proud, which possibly increased their attachment to her predecessor.

"Everybody speaks disparagingly of Marie Louise, and we think with sorrow and regret of the amiability of Josephine," wrote Madame de Rémusat.

Napoleon's mother found her "insignificant and empty," and the Duchesse d'Abrantès declared that "never has a woman possessed less

charm than Marie Louise." Her evening reunions were stiff and wearisome; she neither approached, nor showed herself in the least friendly towards the ladies present; she was just saturated with etiquette."

## CHAPTER V

### Birth of the King of Rome

THE Emperor and the Empress were both delighted at the thought of an heir, and Napoleon confidently hoped that the child would prove a son. The whole of Europe too was in anxious suspense; the great friends of the conqueror being filled with hope—his enemies with fear.

The health of the Empress was excellent, and though she was no heroine, she awaited the event without alarm.

It was the evening of the 19th of March, says *Le Moniteur*, when the streets of Paris were swarming with folk, who hoped each minute to hear the thunder of the cannon.

The Emperor had summoned his mother, with the princes and princesses, to the Tuileries, where the highest officers of state were also assembled; while two physicians, four court functionaries and sixteen ladies were in the Empress's bedroom.

But the course of things was not smooth; anxiety was at its height during the night, and early the following morning, Napoleon, who was seeking to calm his nerves in a warm bath, was imperatively disturbed by one of the doctors, who explained the situation when the Emperor

asked: "What would you do if this were a woman of the people, not an Empress? Act just as you would in some little house in St Denis. Do all you can for both mother and child, but, if you cannot save *both*, let the mother be spared to me."

It was done—the Emperor was summoned—he embraced his wife, but cast not a glance on the child, who was thought to be dead, lying on the floor, in a corner.

In the meantime the second doctor picked up the little son! After warm towels, hard rubbings and a few drops of cognac, in five or six minutes signs of life were clearly seen.

An expression of intense delight spread over the severe face of the Emperor, when his child uttered its first cry, and with the impulse of a youth of twenty, he kissed him again and again.

He had reached the goal of his wishes, and softly humming to himself he rushed up the stairs to his own room, and called out to a few courtiers who were awaiting him:

"Gentlemen, it's a splendid boy! I had to wait for an heir, but he's come at last!" Then, when the twenty-second report of the cannon was heard, announcing the fact that a prince was born, the universal joy found its vent in jubilant shouts.

Soon afterwards, the famous aeronaut, Madame Blanchard, ascended in her balloon, and threw printed notices of the child's birth broadcast

over the towns and villages in the neighbourhood of the capital, where flags were already flying. Processions and fireworks were the order of the day, popular *fêtes* and charitable gifts.

The Emperor personally acquainted the Empress Josephine with the news of the birth of his son, and communicated the news to all the reigning houses of Europe.

" These are good letters," he said. " I have never despatched better ones."

From nearly all the courts and governments came congratulations to the parents and orders for the little one, who was privately baptised, on the day of his birth, with the names of Napoleon François Charles Joseph—after his father, his mother's father and his father's father—and the title of " King of Rome " was at once bestowed on him, while sketches and paintings by the most famous artists were soon to be seen in all lands.

Fashion utilised the occasion, and handkerchiefs, paper and trinkets bore the representation of the magnificent cradle presented by the city of Paris, together with numerous knick-knacks, called " Le Roi de Rome."

In the course of a week, Napoleon received two thousand poems in praise of his son, the most exaggerated of which were literally no more than an echo of the spirit that for the moment was uppermost in France.

The following amusing lines were composed

by a French poet, before the birth of the child:—

"Le sexe de l'enfant, espoir de la patrie,
Même pour l'Empereur est encore un secret.
C'est la seule fois dans sa vie,
Qu'il n'a pas su ce qu'il faisait."

Many poets maintained that the peace of the world depended on this little child.

He was called "the hope of a great people," and "L'Aiglon," from the day of his birth.

One of them wrote:

"Noble enfant, contemple ton père,
Tu seras l'honneur de la terre
Si tu parviens à l'égaler."

Another verse praised him as:

"Le cœur de sa mère,
La sagesse de son père,
La beauté d'Apollon,
La valeur de Trajan."

In a third poem were the words:

"Le titre de Roi de Rome
Est un engagement à l'immortalité."

Then a Paris lawyer wrote:

"Ainsi que l'Aigle généreux
Ne reconnaît pour digne de sa race
Que l'Aiglon, dont la fière audace
Sur le soleil, ose fixer les yeux.
Ainsi Napoléon, notre amour, notre appui,
Ne peut avoir pour fils qu'un héros comme lui."

It is true that some of his enemies gave vent to their resentment, but the voices of

the minority were overpowered by the universal joy, and his house was apparently on a sure foundation.

The title "King of Rome" was a thorn in the flesh to the Imperial house of Austria, for up to the time of the overthrow of the German dynasty by Napoleon, the eldest son of the Emperor of Austria had borne the title of "King of Rome." But, in spite of this, a hope was cherished that the child would bring Paris and Vienna nearer together, which accounted for the joy at his birth in the Imperial capital.

However, simultaneously, the Emperor's implacable enemies were corresponding, and Pozzo di Borgo wrote from Corsica to Sir Stratford Canning in London:

"Wait for the end! Napoleon is a giant that can bend the proudest oaks of the wood; but the day will come when the ghost of the trees will burst his degrading fetters. The oaks will arise with stormy might, and slay the giant!"

"I distinctly recall my sadness when the twenty-second shot was heard," wrote the editor of *Der Rheinische Antiquarius*, many years later, "but I comforted myself with the benevolent thought that Henry VI. was crowned King of France and England while in his cradle, and yet he was a prisoner in his hereditary kingdom for the whole of his life."

Some Austrian poet wrote when the child was born:

" Wait a few years, and we shall most likely have this ' King of Rome ' as a beggar scholar, here in Vienna ! "

But nobody listened to the audacious prophecy, which was fulfilled three years later.

N 100 MUSÉE DU LOUVRE
PRUD'HON — Le Roi de Rome

## CHAPTER VI

Napoleon and his Son—The Comtesse de Montesquiou and the Duchesse de Montebello

FROM his birth, the Emperor tried to allow some reflection of his own power to rest upon his child. Such as came with petitions, and understood how to flatter his fatherly devotion, could rely on the fulfilment of their wishes.

A well-known man, desirous of some appointment, applied for it, and addressed his petition to the "King of Rome." One of his friends, an adjutant, procured him an audience, and he was led into the presence of the little King, before whom he bowed, and then read his petition.

"What did the King of Rome reply?" asked Napoleon, as the petitioner came away.

"His Majesty did not say a word!"

"He who is silent, consents!" said the Emperor, and shortly afterwards the candidate received his post.

Every day, at breakfast, the little one was brought to him, beaming with joy when he saw his father, who was never weary of playing with him; sometimes he took him before a mirror, and made faces to amuse him, devising a hundred things to make him laugh. But if he cried, the

Emperor used to say, apparently in sober earnestness :

" His Majesty cries ! Fy, fy—a king must not cry."

" The Emperor is quite wrapped up in his son," wrote Marie Louise to her family. " He carries him about in his arms, and is a child himself when he has him with him. He tries to give him meat, but the little one can't bear it ! He sits on his father's knee, and dips his wee fingers in wine or sauce, and then smears his face all over, while both of them laugh at the fun."

He began to walk when he was eight months old, and very early showed signs of intelligence. He was strong, quick and lively, and all who saw him were of opinion that he certainly looked at least a year older than he was.

Napoleon had appointed the Comtesse de Montesquiou to be governess to this child of France, a noble woman, honoured and beloved by all classes, and suited in every respect for the responsible task entrusted to her. She belonged to an old family of rank, and the words " noble de nom et noble de cœur " were most truthfully applied to her. Her life was irreproachable. She was highly gifted, with perfect manners, and genuine religious feelings, without parading them. She had been an estimable daughter, and was now a good wife, a faithful friend and an excellent mother.

Everything concerning the little one was under

her supervision ; she arranged each detail for the best ; loved and cared for him as a mother, which Marie Louise never seems to have done, or hardly to have realised that she possessed a son. It is true that etiquette was in the way of intimate intercourse between him and his mother. She had his portrait painted again and again, and distributed copies in the family,[1] and observed the progress that he made, bodily and mentally ; but she never learnt how to occupy herself with her own child.

On 23rd April she wrote thus to the Duchess of Saxe Teschen :

" I hope that my son will resemble his father, and that he will make all around him as happy as he does ! "

And in December of the same year she wrote to the Emperor of Austria :

" I am convinced that it would give you the greatest pleasure to see my domestic happiness."

The child was brought to his mother every morning at nine o'clock, when she took him in her arms and kissed him, but immediately gave him back to the nurse, and resumed the reading of her paper.

When with his mother, he missed the amusement he was accustomed to, got impatient and

[1] In the course of the year 1811 Isabey took seven portraits of the King of Rome, by her orders, and all through her life, she wore a bracelet with her son's likeness in enamel.

screamed, as though frightened; when he was promptly dismissed.

When his mother was starting for a drive, or perhaps on her return, he was often on the terrace, and she would just nod to him, but as she wore a huge hat with waving plumes, he simply roared with fright at her greetings.

She sometimes took her embroidery into his nursery in the afternoon, looking up now and again just to say: "Good-day, little friend!" And then at the end of half-an-hour or so, she would be told that her drawing or music master had arrived.

The child thought infinitely more of the Comtesse de Montesquiou than of his mother, for she understood his tiny pleasures, and her lap was the place of refuge when in tears with childish griefs; in fact, all the instinctive gentleness and gratitude of the child were shared between herself and his father.

The most important ladies of the court were the King of Rome's governess and the Duchesse de Montebello, lady-in-waiting to the Empress, whom she had met at Strassburg, and who had ingratiated herself in her favour by speaking in the highest terms of the Emperor of Austria, and the house of Habsburg in general.

From the very first hour she had made herself indispensable by helping to read the almost indecipherable letters of Napoleon to his bride. And again, at the birth of her son, she had

shown herself faithful in her devotion to her mistress.

She had her apartments adjoining those of Marie Louise, and was the only person who could see her at any time—in fact, it was not only her right, but her duty, to be always with her.

The young Empress allowed herself to be deluded by these strenuous efforts to gain her favour, and with implicit confidence threw herself into her arms, allowing herself to be under her yoke, during her life in France. Her inexperience and want of energy formed fruitful ground for a friendship which confused her weak judgment, and kept her motherly affection in check, reminding us of the friendship of Marie Antoinette for the Duchesse de Polignac.[1]

The duchess, who was extremely jealous, kept others away from the Empress. She was haughty and grasping, and, in spite of Marie Louise's lavish generosity, she could not brook that the least sign of friendship should be given to others.

If her mistress wished to make a present to her ladies, she had to watch her opportunity and do so in the absence of the duchess. And when Napoleon increased the income of the Comtesse de Montesquiou to 50,000 francs, Marie Louise had no peace until she had persuaded him to do the same for her friend.

[1] See Clara Tschudi's "Marie Antoinette," translated by E. M. Cope.

At court the old aristocracy was represented by the governess of the King of Rome ; the new nobility by the Duchesse de Montebello, who committed mistakes, attributable to her birth, and her unexpected promotion.

The Comtesse de Montesquiou had the virtues which belonged to the former days, but she was free from the errors and vices which had stained so many members of the *ancien régime.* The two were not only individuals who had no mutual affinity, but they were types of different epochs and conditions, that jarred upon each other.

The duchess was always on the alert to annoy the countess in numberless mean ways ; and as Marie Louise heard nothing but through her friend it was easy for the duchess to arouse her suspicion. She was nearly always with the Empress ; the governess was always with the King of Rome ; therefore, if the mother wished to have her child with her, she had to put up with her too. But when the Empress found herself in the presence of this gentlewoman, of whom all thought well, though her friend maligned and hated her, she instinctively felt her superiority, and that it was not possible for her to neglect the winsome child, heir to the throne of France.

## CHAPTER VII

The Little King—Preparations for the Russian Campaign —Napoleon and Marie Louise in Dresden

THE King of Rome and his governess lived alone, though it is true that, when the parents went to the Trianon, in July and August, their son was with them; but, while they lived in the large castle, the child and the countess occupied the little one.

The Emperor had never allowed his first wife to enter his private room; Marie Louise gained permission from the first to go to him, but on the understanding that the visit must be a very short one. The only person allowed to disturb him when at work was his son, whom he had on his knee while he signed documents, held in his arms while he dictated, or let him rummage among waste papers, or amuse himself with his toy soldiers. Then the Emperor would sometimes lie on a grass plat with the little one near him, and watch the tottering steps coming towards him, when he would place his three-cornered hat on his little head, and clasp his sabre round him. The hat fell over his face, and the father laughed heartily when the tiny feet got entangled in the belt.

The Comtesse de Montesquiou went with the

Napoleon, Marie Louise, the King of Rome and the Countess of Montesquiou

child each morning to his father's study, where he was always styled "Sire" and "Your Majesty," while he spoke of himself as "the little King," and his dear governess was always "Mama Quiou."

It happened one morning that he arrived all alone, running along too fast for the Countess to keep up with him.

He looked up at the doorkeeper with his bright smile, saying coaxingly:

"Open the door. I want to go to papa!"

But Napoleon had given orders that he should not be admitted unless his governess was with him. Of course he could not come without her, but as he was showing signs of self-will the Emperor had adopted this plan, to make him grasp the authority of the Countess.

"Sire, I cannot open the door for your Majesty," said the doorkeeper.

"Why not?" asked the child. "I am the little King!"

"Because your Majesty is alone."

Tears came into his eyes, but he did not say another word.

The Countess had joined him; the child took her hand, and in a commanding tone repeated:

"Open the door! The little King orders it!" Whereupon the doorkeeper opened the door, and announced:

"His Majesty, the King of Rome!"

One day he appeared just as his father was

dismissing a ministerial conference, and, without heeding the strangers, he ran up to him, prepared to sit on his knee.

It was easy to see from his expression how delighted Napoleon was at the little one's absolute confidence, but still he stopped him, and said :

" Sire, you have not bowed ! Do so to these gentlemen ! "

The child turned round, bowed low, and threw kisses to the ministers, thankful then to hide his face on his father's shoulder.

Beaming with delight, the Emperor said :

" You see, gentlemen, that I have brought up my son according to the rules for ' children's politeness.' " [1]

It not infrequently happened that begging letters were put into his tiny hands, which he always gave to his father, who would say :

" So, my son, you have already begun to grant pensions. You are losing no time ! "

One day the famous actor, Talma, the Emperor's friend from his youth, was lunching with him ; and while they were still at table the little King was brought in. Napoleon took him on his knee, and slapped his face, as he asked his friend :

" Talma, what am I doing now ? "

And as the actor could find nothing to say, he continued :

[1] " La Civilité puérile et honnête "—an old book, with rules for polite conduct in children.

" Don't you see that I am chastising a king ? "

During his teething, the little one was frequently ill, and it happened that his parents were absent for many months in Holland and Belgium. They returned in November, and the Countess met them at the palace steps, with the King of Rome.

There was not a sign that the long absence had caused the mother any regret, and she seemed perfectly indifferent to her child, without even a word of gratitude or recognition to his governess.

The Emperor, on the contrary, had been deeply concerned about his son during their absence, and anxious on his return to show in every way possible how he appreciated the services of the Countess.

. . . . . .

In spite of the early development of the King of Rome, it was very difficult to make him pronounce distinctly, and his governess thought the being constantly with grown-up people might be the cause. It was her wish that he should have a companion, a little older than himself, with whom he could play, and even fight.

It happened that one of the court ladies had a boy, who was brought to the palace, and progress was rapid, for it was not long before the little King spoke clearly and fluently. An A B C was procured, and the Countess gave him his very first instruction in reading. Games

went on merrily, and if the elder lad thought nobody could see, he thrashed the little King!

The Comtesse de Montesquiou had retired from society, and separated herself from her family, in order to give herself up entirely to the Emperor's son; not only as to his material well-being, for she watched over his moral development with the purest devotion. She did her utmost to control his hasty temper, to arouse his intelligence, and to train him to overcome his faults.

She never struck him; she had other means. On one occasion, when she refused to do what he wanted, he threw himself on the floor, kicked and howled, when she hastened to shut all the doors, and put up the shutters. The boy was so intensely surprised that the sunlight should be banished in the daytime, that he forgot his wrath, and asked why everything was closed.

"So that nobody can hear you, Sire!" answered the Countess. "Do you think that Frenchmen will have you for their Emperor if they know how violent you are?"

"Did I scream very loud?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Do you think they heard me?"

"I am afraid they did!"

"I am ashamed now. I won't do it again! Mama Quiou, forgive me!"

He put his arms round her neck, and began to cry, but this time he was sorry.

Marie Louise and the King of Rome

" My son is as strong as a child of three," wrote his mother, when he was two years old. " He is very lively, and has many funny fancies, like my brother Franz had, when he was little ! "

The artists who painted him tried to make the likeness to his father as striking as possible.

" He is the very image of his father," Marie Louise wrote to the Austrian Emperor. " For this reason I love him all the more. He is unusually full of spirits, a good and amiable child."

Napoleon's sister, Caroline of Naples, gave him a charming little mother-of-pearl carriage, for which Franconi, the renowned circus rider of the day, trained two goats, and in this he drove every day on the terrace, to the delight of the spectators.

He was also to be seen in the Bois de Boulogne and in the Parc Monceau, accompanied by his governess, and followed by a detachment of infantry. He wore a hat of silk and white lace close to his face, and looked charming as he nodded, and kissed his hand repeatedly.

On the occasion of a review on the Champ de Mars, Napoleon presented his son to the Guards, and as he heard the joyful shout of his own regiment, he beamed with pleasure. When it was over, he was talking to some gentlemen present about building a palace for the King of Rome in the vicinity of the École Militaire, holding the little one in his arms, and caressing him repeatedly the while.

The many who had looked for peace from the fact of the Emperor's second marriage were thoroughly disappointed. Early in 1811, he announced to the Austrian ambassador that the good understanding with Russia had been disturbed through mistrust and coolness, and shortly after the birth of the King of Rome, there was a rumour that a fresh war was contemplated.

With all his might he hastened the formidable preparations for the campaign against the dominions of the Czar; yet, at the same time, he contrived to make it appear that it was he who was menaced in the first instance.

The majority of Europe believed that France was invincible. Austria did not doubt but that Napoleon, with one mighty blow, could hurl Russia to the ground. And therefore, when war broke out, the Emperor Francis and his Government placed themselves on the side of Napoleon: 130,000 Austrians were to accompany the French army, subject to their own leaders, but all under the supreme command of France.

Marie Louise was on the same hearty footing with her family as before her marriage, and her letters were regular. She treated her father with the deference of her childhood, and frequently sent presents to her stepmother and brothers and sisters.

It was Napoleon's object that the world

should grasp the good understanding that reigned between the Imperial houses, and he therefore wished that the alliance of the states should be ratified by a personal meeting between the monarchs, to take place at Dresden.

In Vienna, war against Russia was unpopular, the interview was not acceptable, and it was with difficulty that the Empress Maria Ludovica could be induced to undertake the journey. On the other hand, the Duke of Bassano was strongly against Marie Louise leaving France, alleging that she "ought not to be absent from the King of Rome, or neglect anything that could prove her to be a good mother."

His argument met with no response: it was her wish to see her relations.

Finally, it was decided that the meeting in Dresden should be a short one; but that, on the departure of Napoleon to Russia, the young Empress should accompany her parents to Prague, where she would find her brothers and sisters.

The French Imperial couple left home on 9th May 1812, and we learn from a contemporary that "never did an army, marching to war, give such an impression of starting on a pleasure tour as this one did."

At each halting-place, German princes were there to pay their respects to Napoleon, while kings and dukes jostled each other in the little

Saxony capital, which had been chosen for headquarters.

On the whole, he treated his crowned guests with winning friendliness; though it happened a few times that he was cross and reserved. Sometimes he stretched himself and yawned at table, but not one of the kings and queens present dared say a word.

He had scores of arrangements to make, and worked unremittingly; but, the instant the people caught sight of him, "Hurrah!" was the cry.

On 7th May Marie Louise received a letter from her father to say that he and the Empress would be with them in a few days, and she was beside herself with joy at the prospect of meeting them.

The Emperor Francis embraced his son-in-law, but Maria Ludovica could not overcome her antipathy towards the son of the Revolution, and the long-standing enemies of Austria.

Napoleon was well aware of his mother-in-law's sentiments, and he had attributed to her a report that Marie Louise was unhappy in France; he felt perfectly sure, too, that the Austrian Empress would place herself at the head of his opponents, if he suffered but one little defeat. Still, their intercourse was apparently smooth during the course of a few days, when he overpowered her with attentions, and persuaded his wife to do the same.

The Emperor Francis found Dresden very tedious; his only amusement was to inspect all that was worth seeing in the capital, when he wished his daughter to accompany him. But she rarely went out, staying indoors on the chance that Napoleon might have a few spare moments to devote to her. Her father could not understand that she should prefer to wait for the uncertainty of her husband's coming rather than spend the mornings in his company, and both he and his wife simply ridiculed their daughter's devotion.

"Le Roi Soleil," Louis XIV., had never been the object of more humble submission than that given to the Emperor of the French, during this first part of his march to Russia.

Bourrienne relates in his memoirs that, although their stay in Dresden cannot be called the summit of his renown, it was the most brilliant period of his reign, on account of the number of crowned heads that appeared upon the scene, as though they were his courtiers.

Le Comte de Ségur, who arrived rather late one day, excused himself to the Emperor by saying that he had been hindered by the large number of kings that were waiting outside.

"Napoleon is the king of kings," exclaimed Archbishop Pradt, who wrote of the devotion and

submission shown to the conqueror, whose confidence in the power of his own personality rendered a guard unnecessary.

"I am in a well-bred family, with good people: I need no guard," he said.

## CHAPTER VIII

The Emperor in Russia—Gérard's Portrait of the King of Rome—Malet's Conspiracy

NAPOLEON had left for Russia with his immense army, and Marie Louise was, for the present, with her parents. The parting had caused her many tears, and from Prague she wrote to her lady-in-waiting, the Comtesse de Luçay :

" I have good news from the Emperor, who just now is in the neighbourhood of Königsberg ; he seems cheerful and satisfied. I cannot feel happy till I meet the Emperor again, and I would give some years of my life to purchase the moment ! "

On the 8th July she returned to St Cloud, where she was welcomed by the King of Rome and his governess, who had gone over from Paris.

It was the first time since her marriage that she had been separated from Napoleon, so that hitherto she had only seen the attractive side of her new dignity, when apparently everything lay at her feet.

Now that she was deprived of her protector she felt, for the first time, that she was lonely, and in a foreign land.

After an absence of two months from her child, under the circumstances, it would have seemed more than natural that she should have given a warm welcome to the little one and been happy in having him with her. But, instead, she grew more and more friendly towards the Duchesse de Montebello, and showed the strangest indifference towards her son.

She drove out with him on great festivals, and wrote of him :

" He is very pretty and strong, he runs about alone, and he has fifteen teeth ! "

But every detail of his daily life continued to be arranged by his governess, and, in the absence of his father, he clung with increased love and devotion to " Mama Quiou." And although the mother lived under the same roof with them, and Napoleon was on the way to Russia, it was to him that the Countess appealed in her daily letters, when she reported sundry little details of her charge. The Emperor replied with his own hand, and always in terms of grateful acknowledgment.

The Countess and the little King spent the spring months in Meudon, where, to please the Emperor, she had the child's likeness taken, riding on a lamb.

Napoleon received it, 23rd August, in Smolensk, and replied immediately :

" I have received the King's portrait. I consider it excellent, and I am glad of this

Napoleon in Russia

opportunity to express my great satisfaction in all your care for him." [1]

When Marie Louise heard of the circumstance, she too determined to give him a picture of their son. The governess had sent a miniature: the Empress ordered Gérard to paint a full-sized likeness.

It was about 1st September, when the advancing French army first saw the enemy, stationed on the heights of Borodino, a village seventy-two miles west of Moscow, and on the morning of the fifth, the Emperor was early on horseback to superintend the preparations for the coming fight.

He was interrupted by an officer just arrived from Paris, the bearer of the King of Rome's portrait, which he ordered to be unpacked on the spot, and then looked at it again and again, when he said to the generals and adjutants standing near: "You may be quite sure that if my son were fifteen, he would be among us in very different guise than in this picture."

He then had it raised up on a chair outside his tent, so that the grenadiers might see it, but after an hour or two, as if to free himself from all emotion caused by the thought of his son, he said:

"Take it away! It's too soon for him to be present at a battle!"

[1] This miniature was Napoleon's companion in all his sorrows, and it was the very last object on which his eyes rested before they closed for ever.

The following day the contest began between 130,000 French and an equal number of Russians. Napoleon remained master of the field; but it was covered with 70,000 dead. Thirty of his generals had fallen, and twenty more, together with hundreds of officers, were dangerously wounded. It was the most sanguinary battle he had ever fought, and the enemy was not conquered.

Napoleon himself was so hoarse that he could not command.

"We looked at him with astonishment," relates Ségur. "Hitherto, in all great encounters, he had invariably displayed calm and activity, but on this occasion he was uneasy, irresolute and careless."

It was easy to see on his return to his tent, after the battle, that he was ill and depressed.

He had conquered and the victory looked useless. Racked with fever, and so hoarse that he had to write his orders, he was for three days close to the field of battle, in absolute inactivity. But at the end of a week he stood before Moscow—the actual goal of his longings.

The city he entered had not been conquered, but deserted, and the night following his entry the houses began to burn, the fire having been previously prepared by the inhabitants of this ancient city.

During the five fateful weeks that the Emperor

spent in Moscow, Gérard's portrait of the King of Rome hung in his bedroom, and was shown to all who came to see him.[1]

One day he said with a proud look to General Rapp :

"My son is the most beautiful child in France."

On 6th October he wrote to his wife :

"I hope that the little King is a source of pleasure to you."

And the same day he wrote to the Comtesse de Montesquiou :

"I greatly value your regard for me, and I am deeply in your debt as to gratitude for your unvarying devotion to the little King. I am delighted to hear of the hopes that he awakens."[2]

In the meantime a conspiracy was in progress in Paris.

General Malet, a violent Republican, who had raised disturbances five years previously, had again placed himself at the head of a revolt.

By order of the Emperor he had been confined in a lunatic asylum, but his accomplices had effected his release, when he issued proclama-

[1] The picture was lost on the retreat from Russia. But Gérard had taken a second copy, before sending it to Marie Louise. Napoleon left this one to the Comtesse de Montesquiou, which is still in the possession of her descendants.

[2] These unreserved expressions of gratitude hardly tally with the commanding tone used to others ; but they go far not only to prove his warm love for his son, but also his confidence and high esteem for his governess.

tions, created appointments, and rushed in upon a simpleton of an officer, named Soulier, followed by a band of young men in republican uniforms and bright coloured scarves.

Malet made the man believe that he had come from Russia, and that the Emperor Napoleon was dead; then, forcing Soulier to place 1200 men under his command, he hastened to La Force, where Generals Guildal and Lahorie were imprisoned for resistance against the Emperor. He released them, and then hurried to the Commandant of Paris, whom he wounded with a pistol shot, after which he was unmasked and secured, which virtually brought the conspiracy to a close; though, before it was quite over, General Lahorie had to gain admission to the Minister of Police, whom he had himself sent to prison.

The whole of France was aghast that it had been such a simple matter to make the troops believe that Napoleon had been killed, and that not a single officer had made inquiries, or even thought of the King of Rome.

The imprisonment of the Minister of Police caused the greatest sensation, and cast a shade of ridicule over Napoleon's police, who had hitherto been looked upon as the strongest support of the Government.

Marie Louise wrote:

"I am not in the least uneasy as to the uproar created by a few rioters. I am too thoroughly

convinced of the good qualities of the people, and of their devotion to the Emperor."

Nobody dared reveal to her that Malet had published the draft of a new form of government, and that in one of the paragraphs it was declared that her marriage was invalid, and her son illegitimate. Neither had she been told that fourteen men were to perish on the scaffold for taking part in the affair.

It was during the horrors of the retreat that Napoleon heard of the conspiracy, which first roused his indignation, and then, from the snow plains of Russia, he began to see the circumstances in all their clearness and importance. He suddenly realised that the mighty empire which he had constructed by means of his wars was resting on a volcano.

"How is it possible," he exclaimed, with sorrow and bitterness, "that not a soul thought of my son, my wife, and the institutions of my Empire!"

## CHAPTER IX

Return of Napoleon—His Efforts to have the King of Rome crowned

THE Emperor hastened his return to the capital, and it was a relief to him to be no longer a witness of the unspeakable sufferings of his army, the dismal remains of which his generals were slowly leading back to France.

During the first week in December, Marie Louise and the King of Rome had returned to the Tuileries. It was about eleven o'clock of the night of the 18th, the Empress had gone to bed, and her lady-in-waiting, who occupied an adjoining room, was on the point of seeing that all the doors were shut, when she was startled by hasty steps.

The drawing-room door was open, and two men entered, Napoleon and Caulaincourt.

The guard had refused to allow the Emperor to enter the palace, not a soul suspected he could return, and in the first moment he was not recognised. The Empress sprang from her bed, and embraced him repeatedly.

He returned to Paris apparently as proud as if he had signed an honourable peace. He ascribed his defeat to the elements, and could not grasp the impression that had been made by his return

upon the Allies, as well as in his own land. He did not fear the criticism of Europe, and looked upon himself as the same powerful man on 1st January 1813 as he had been on 1st January 1812.

Malet's conspiracy seemed to have more interest than the recent appalling war; and he insisted on being told the minutest details of the remarkable affair; while he asked again and again:

"Why did they not think of my son?"

He resumed his usual mode of life, enlisted fresh recruits, and prepared with extraordinary zeal for the renewal of the contest.

It was only by slow degrees that the surviving officers and men returned, and the verbal description of their sufferings surprised everybody.

Nearly each family had to mourn relatives and friends, while widows and fatherless children were recognised on all sides. Then, too, death in Russia had been so tragic, and those who had survived their comrades thought with horror of the snow plains where they lay buried.

There was a depressed feeling over the empire, though Napoleon commanded that his stepdaughter, Hortense, and all the highest officials, should give balls, and so on, according to custom. Outsiders visiting the Tuileries were tempted to believe that the campaign had been an ugly dream, which daylight and the return of the Emperor had put to flight. Life at court was as regular

as before, and the ruler had never appeared more calm or confident.

The year 1813 began on a Friday, and superstitious Frenchmen looked upon this day and the number thirteen as an ill-omened warning. Then it became a subject of comment, both in the capital and the provinces, that their ruler's marriage with the daughter of the Austrian Emperor had brought misfortune.[1]

Four days after his return from Russia he commissioned Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angely to examine all the MSS. and printed works bearing on the forms that had been used by the old French kings when it was the question of crowning an heir to the throne.

Regnault and the king's librarian, Bartier, undertook to prepare a treatise that would throw light on the subject, dating back from Charlemagne.

It was Malet's conspiracy that had revealed to the father how uncertain his son's future would be if *he* were killed by a stray ball from the enemy. But if the founder of the dynasty allowed a son's consecration, while he himself

[1] It is known that, towards the close of his reign, Napoleon expressed a superstitious fear that it was his union with Marie Louise that would cause his downfall. As he was riding out to St Cloud, one day, the Empress followed him in her carriage, and her red shawl frightened his horse. The Emperor was thrown, and as he got up he muttered : " I have been unfortunate ever since Marie Louise came to me."

lived, it would be impossible not to recognise the King of Rome as *his* true successor.

This was his reason for wishing him to be crowned now, as future Emperor. In the meantime the boy was hardly two years old, and it was naturally urged that the mother, who, in such a case, would act as regent, ought to be crowned with him.

Regnault and Bartier betook themselves a second time to the old parchments, and on 10th January published a treatise on the coronation of a king's mother and regent, and on the same day Napoleon held a conference with his ministers, touching upon the matter.

Two days later the authors began to publish the fruits of their studies in *Le Moniteur* and *Le Journal de l'Empire.*[1]

The Emperor wished to prepare the people for his plans—balloons and notices were sent up aloft!

But the coronation city of Rheims was no longer the seat of an archbishop; and the Pope, who alone could perform the sacred act, was a prisoner. In 1808, Napoleon had occupied the States of the Church with his troops; and as the Pope, Pius VII., had refused to be a willing tool for him, the Emperor had him moved about from one prison to another. In 1812 he sent him to

[1] "Recherches sur le Couronnement des fils aînés des Rois héritiers du trone, et sur leur prestation de serment du vivant de leur père."

France, where the worthy old man lived like a monk in his cell, and spent his days in prayer and fasting, or mending the rags of his priestly garments.

The task of governing the Church without him had not been successful ; and, next to his divorce from Josephine, nothing had more distinctly deprived Napoleon of the sympathy of the French, than the sufferings which he had brought upon the Head of the Church.

On 29th December 1812 he sent him a gracious letter into his prison, expressing the wish to make terms with him. But Pius replied that, if they were to negotiate, the whole Consistory must be assembled ; he, as a prisoner, having no right to act.

On 19th January 1813, Napoleon went to Fontainebleau, and, as he fancied that the Austrian archduchess might be useful on this occasion, he ordered that the Empress and the court should accompany him.

He had several interviews with the Pope, and proposed fresh terms, which the amiable old man allowed himself to accept.

On 27th January, the Emperor returned to Paris, confident that the King of Rome and Marie Louise would be crowned. He communicated his plan to the Senate, 2nd February, and the coronation was fixed for 7th March.

In the meantime, Pius VII. repented of his yielding to persuasion; the ceremony was

Napoleon I. and Napoleon II

deferred from week to week ; and on 24th March the Emperor received a message that the Holy Father withdrew his promise, and absolutely refused to ratify in writing what he had expressed by word of mouth.

He therefore remained, resigned to the will of God, and uncomplainingly, a close prisoner, until the opponents of Napoleon restored him, in 1814, to his full papal and worldly rights.

The efforts of the Emperor had been fruitless, and all thought of the coronation of the King of Rome had to be abandoned.

He was beside himself that this well-digested plan, which he had so ardently desired to carry out, should have come to nothing, and that the best weapons he would have forged for his son should have fallen to pieces in his own hands.

## CHAPTER X

War of 1813—Napoleon meets Metternich—The King of Rome during the Fall of the Empire

NAPOLEON was more feared than beloved in his capital, where his visits had been shorter and shorter in the course of years.

He disliked the Tuileries, and removed each spring to St Cloud, declaring his intention of eventually residing at Versailles ; or, as he would sometimes say, at Lyons. When he returned to Paris from a simple ride he used to exclaim :

" So we are once more back in great Babylon ! "

The curiosity of the inhabitants annoyed him, and they, on their side, knew full well that their Emperor did not like them ; and they revenged themselves by telling tales about him, and ridiculing his family expenses.

His first wife had occupied a prominent position in Paris, at different periods of her life, and was as well acquainted with the old Royalist families, as with Republicans and Imperialists. But her perfect tact and real goodness had made her beloved by all in the capital, where she proved herself a true " helpmeet " to her husband.

Napoleon had purposely kept his second wife aloof from the people. Josephine was still remembered by them, but Marie Louise would

be forgotten, if he were taken. She was barely known, and the few whom she recognised did not like her. He grasped, but too late, that he had acted unwisely, and then suddenly called upon her to visit asylums and hospitals, and personally go to the chief shops and make her purchases.

Having discovered that it was impossible to have his son crowned, he exerted himself to make him popular; and ordered that the little one should show himself each day; so his drive was arranged for the frequented parts of the city.

There was grand parade on 5th March, and the Emperor had the King of Rome brought to the Champ de Mars, where he himself carried him through rows upon rows of soldiers, watching him attentively, and glad to note that he was not afraid.

He loved the child, and was proud of him, but he could not change him into a man; and it was a grown-up heir that he longed for.

Paris was like a prison to him, and, warmly as he hoped that the people would learn to know his wife and love his child, there was hardly a leaf on the trees, when they left for Trianon, to return in a fortnight to the Tuileries, and leave, at the end of five days, for the Elysée.

It was the little King's birthday (20th March), but it passed absolutely unheeded.

In spite of his overwhelming troubles, thoughts and plans, the Emperor made time to see his child, whom he found prayed each evening for

France and his father. His governess had taught him to close each prayer with these words:

"My God, grant to my father the wish to make peace—for the welfare of France and us all!"

And one day, during this very prayer, his father came in, and heard his words.

Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise had steeped him in illusions, and he still hoped that the Emperor of Austria would never desert the cause of his daughter and his daughter's son. But Metternich—Austria's powerful foreign minister—was only apparently his ally; he had secretly maintained an alliance, not only with Russian diplomatists, but with England, who was Napoleon's most irreconcilable enemy.

"The moment has come at last in which I can show myself, as I am, to the French Emperor!" was the exclamation of Francis of Austria when he heard of the retreat from Moscow.

All foreign auxiliary troops had left him long ago. The youth of Germany had risen against him, and the King of Prussia, Frederick William III., had yielded to the enthusiasm of his people. The court of Vienna was longing to take part in a war against the French conqueror, and Metternich was of opinion that the time had come in which to cast off the yoke.

Up to this time his father-in-law had not officially taken either side—for or against him—and his letters to his daughter always breathed

a hope for peace. The possibility of difference between France and her old Fatherland never seems to have occurred to Marie Louise. She sent costly New Year gifts to her family, and wrote to her father: "God grant that your wish may be fulfilled, and that we shall shortly have peace."

In the meantime the French ambassador in Vienna had informed his master that there was good reason for him to mistrust Austria. But the Emperor kept this communication from his ministers and generals, as well as from his wife; he hoped that a victory would prevent both his father-in-law and the princes of the Rhine Confederation from going over to his adversaries. His feeling towards Austria was a bitter one, and Marie Louise heard him more than once speak of the Emperor Francis in a manner that surprised and wounded her.

On the whole he had been careful when speaking of the Austrians, and it was he who encouraged the Empress to write frequently to her family, while he took care that all her letters should breathe confidence in the victory of the French.

While Europe was preparing for a life-and-death struggle, Napoleon was developing the strength and power of his youth's last days. He filled up his regiments with new recruits and centralised his troops, leaving Paris, 15th April 1813, to place himself at their head.

Marie Louise remained in the capital as regent ; but, in reality, the Emperor commanded and governed everything from his headquarters. In order to protect her, and strengthen her position, he was careful that she never interfered in Government affairs, except to show kindness and mercy ; and if, by his command, she had to apply to officials, or speak at a meeting, he dictated every word that she was to say.

The venerable chancellor, Cambacérès, was with her daily, giving advice in all important matters, although he allowed it to appear that it was he who asked her opinion.

The day after the Emperor left, her father's ambassador came to take leave on his return to Vienna, and then gave her to understand that it was the intention of Austria to declare war against France.

In the meantime, Napoleon was approaching Prussia and Russia with his young host.

" Sire ! " exclaimed Marshal Ney, " give me these courageous young fellows, and I will lead them wherever you command. Your veterans create difficulties, but these brave children are afraid of no hindrance ; they look neither to the right nor to the left, always straight ahead, always with honour in view ! "

The battle of Lützen was fought on 2nd May, when France and Germany rushed upon each other with a frenzy that had not been equalled since the days of the Consulate, under the eyes

of the Czar of Russia and the King of Prussia, who were stationed on an adjacent height.

Napoleon was in the midst of the fire, urging on his young recruits by gestures and by shouts ; then, when the victory was his, he believed that he was again master in Europe, for every sign seemed to show that France would conclude an advantageous peace. A Thanksgiving Service was held in Notre Dame on 23rd May, at which the Empress was present in full state.

The unexpected victory caused great excitement in Vienna, and Napoleon's ambassador, Narbonne, wrote thus to the Duke of Bassano, 10th May :

" Accustomed as we have been to see His Majesty work wonders, it is impossible to be without astonishment, or even fresh dismay, when we see how completely his genius is equal to carry out any project."

The victory at Bautzen, which followed immediately afterwards, was not less brilliant, but it brought heavy grief to the Emperor in the death of his best friend, Duroc, who was killed in his immediate neighbourhood.

He hastened to the dying man, who seized his hand and kissed it, as he murmured : " The whole of my life has been devoted to your Majesty's service. I grieve that I must die, but only because I might have been of use to you, if I had been spared."

" Duroc," said his master, " there is a life

after this one, to which you are going, to await me ; we shall meet each other there."

" Yes, Sire ; but that will not be for thirty years, when Your Majesty has conquered his enemies, and accomplished all that he longs to do for our Fatherland."

Napoleon left the hut, when his companion in arms had breathed his last in awful agony, and sat down on a bundle of faggots, before a fire. Neither the sound of artillery nor the fondling of the faithful dog that ran by his horse, and now licked his hand, could rouse him, as he sat, on and on, with his hands clasped on his knees. He wept over this friend, whom he had loved, and it was not till a horseman rode up to him, that he tore himself away from his sorrowful thoughts, and hastily turned away to hide his tears.

Shortly afterwards he wrote to the Comtesse de Montesquiou :

" The death of Duroc, Duc de Frioul, is a great grief to me, and this is the first time in twenty years that he has not been on the watch to anticipate my wishes."

Fear had been expressed that Napoleon's empire would shrink in extent and importance, but both his young troops and his old guards were roused to fresh hopes and ardour ; especially when, instead of concluding peace, Napoleon chose an armistice, which he lived to recognise as an irreparable error.

Metternich

Moreover, the country believed that it was he who did not want peace, and the Allies did all they could to strengthen this opinion—but in reality it no longer depended on him.

Metternich arrived at Dresden, 27th June, in accordance with Napoleon's orders, that he might submit to him the conditions of peace from the combined powers.

The Emperor offered to relinquish some isolated possessions, but his opponents were by no means satisfied with these concessions ; and, in the course of the interview, he became violent and unguarded.

" Do you wish to dishonour me ? " he shouted. " Never ! Your rulers born to the throne may let themselves be conquered twenty times, and return to their capital twenty times, but I will cease to rule the very day that I fail to inspire respect."

" You want war then ? " he continued. " Well, you shall have it. Men are incorrigible ! I have three times replaced the Emperor Francis on his throne, and I have sworn to be at peace with him as long as I live. I have married his daughter, and when I did so I said to myself that I was doing an idiotic thing. I did it, all the same, and rue the day."

Metternich passed over his rudeness in silence, and spoke of the political possibilities from his own point of view.

" Even your army wishes for peace," he said.

"No; only my generals," answered Napoleon; bitterly adding:

"The Emperor Francis then wishes to deprive his daughter of her throne."

"My master knows his duty, and will see his way to fulfil it," answered Metternich. "Whatever his daughter's lot may be, he is first and foremost Emperor, and when he has to make a decision the interests of his people will always be his first consideration."

"Your words do not astonish me," exclaimed Napoleon, interrupting him; "they strengthen my conviction that I have miscalculated, and that I have committed an error that cannot be repaired. When I married an archduchess of Austria, I wished to unite the new with the old, and now I clearly grasp how egregious my mistake was."

The conference lasted eight hours. They had not been disturbed, and it was late in the evening, almost dark, when the Emperor accompanied Metternich to the door.

"You will not declare war against me," he said, slapping him on the shoulder.

"Sire," answered the minister, "you are lost! I suspected it when I arrived, and now that I am leaving you I am sure!"

. . . . . .

Napoleon asked Marie Louise to go to Mayence, where he would meet her, as he wanted to give her, by word of mouth, certain instructions for her future guidance.

The weather was lovely during the visit of the Imperial couple; and the conqueror at Lützen and Bautzen was the recipient of endless marks of respect. The Empress, who took daily drives in the environs, was calm, as usual; but the hopes, which an armistice had aroused, were soon changed into annoyance, when she heard the sanguinary war was to be renewed, and that there was dissension between her father and Napoleon. She returned to Paris, 1st August, after a touching mutual farewell, when Marie Louise could not restrain her tears, even in the presence of the court.

During his mother's absence the King of Rome was in Paris, where the courtiers were fleeing like rats from a sinking ship. But "Mama Quiou" stuck to her post, and allowed herself to be as little scared as possible by the storm gathering over the child's head, as by the persecution of the Duchesse de Montebello, which lasted on to the end, but *she* lived and breathed to serve the little Napoleon, and to give pleasure to the great one.

The Emperor looked for giant progress, and, when the child was barely two years old, by his father's orders he was worried with the rules of French grammar, and religious instruction that had absolutely no sense for him. The Countess read good books to him, and, by the help of globes and pictures, taught him a little geography. He could recite speeches from

Racine; and before he had completed his second year, he knew thirty of La Fontaine's fables by heart.

He could drive but seldom now, for nearly all the horses were wanted for the war, and they were so short of cavalry in Paris that the twelve riders whose duty it was to follow the carriage of the King of Rome complained that they were too frequently on duty.

The Emperor kept up his close correspondence with the Comtesse de Montesquiou even in the thick of the war, and when his birthday—15th August 1769—drew near, she let the little boy send the following good wishes :—

" Mes caresses naguère n'étaient l'unique gage
Qui te peignait d'un fils les premiers sentiments,
Et dans une humble fleur je t'offrais un hommage
Simple comme l'amour qu'on éprouve à deux ans.

" Les rapides progrès de mon intelligence
Ont suivi l'heureux cours de tes faits immortels,
Et ta grandeur m'éléve au-dessus de, l'enfance
Autant qu'elle te place au-dessus des mortels.

" Cède aux vœux de ton fils, cède aux vœux de la France
En délaissant la gloire un instant pour l'amour,
Que ce bras qui porta jusqu'aux cieux ta puissance
Vienne jusqu'à ton cœur m'élever à mon tour.

" Le Roi de Rome à L'Empereur."

## CHAPTER XI

The Emperor claims the Protection of the National Guard for his Wife and Child—The War of 1814 and the Congress in Châtillon—The Bourbons draw near to France

THE Confederation of the Rhine, which had lasted from 1806-1813, was broken up, and Holland, Bavaria and Würtemberg had withdrawn themselves. Austria had declared war against him. Sweden had allied herself to Russia and Prussia, and Spain was practically in the hands of the English. The Emperor's friends were unanimous in their opinion that he ought to have seized the chance of concluding peace after Lützen and Bautzen. His generals were discouraged, his brother-in-law, Murat, whom he had created King of Naples, had turned his back upon him ; it was only his stepson, Eugène, who fought steadfastly, but without hope.

He suddenly returned to Paris to make arrangements on the spot for the defence of the capital. Besides, he longed to see his wife and child ; and during the important preparations in hand for the campaign of 1814, he allowed himself time to play with the little one, to lie on the floor beside him, watching eagerly, perhaps with a premonition that it was the last time he would fondle the King of Rome.

Before his return to the seat of war—Sunday, 23rd February—he went with his wife into the Salle des Maréchaux, where the officers of the National Guard were awaiting him, followed immediately afterwards by his son. The Emperor and Marie Louise took the child's hands, as he walked between them. Then, during a solemn silence, Napoleon delivered a thrilling speech, announcing officially his departure to put himself at the head of his army, after placing his wife and child in charge of the National Guard. The powerful voice that filled the hall, increased the force of his words, as he shouted three times: "Gentlemen, you pledge yourselves to the safety of the Empress and the King of Rome! Am I right, you promise to protect them?"

Every hand was raised, and strong voices shouted: "Yes, yes"; for even those who were bitter against him were full of sympathy at this moment; while even the Empress forgot her indifference, and was so carried away by the universal emotion, that she nearly fainted.

The Emperor then went down to the soldiers drawn up outside, carrying his son, whom he kissed again and again. The excitement was great as he passed through the ranks, and the hurrahs were caught up by the crowds, who responded to the enthusiasm of the troops.

But, after all, it was only one of those momentary moods of which he had so often been the

occasion, and which occur so frequently in French history.

Napoleon did his utmost to awaken confidence. Old patriotic songs, that were nearly forgotten, were sung; every barrel-organ played the "Marseillaise," to which words in his honour had been composed. And yet, what a contrast between the present and the brilliant days that were gone! Wherever he turned he saw treachery and desertion, while he himself distrusted his brothers, his generals, his ministers and his courtiers. The kings who but recently had grovelled in the dust before him, did all that was possible to crush him—his day of defeat had dawned!

He never mentioned war to his wife, but treated her, as before, with gentle consideration.

Then he ordered a likeness to be painted of the King of Rome in the uniform of the National Guard, with underneath the words: "I pray to God for my father and for France."

Foreign caricatures made use of the child as a target for their ridicule, and "little Boney" was represented in a series of comic postures; now with a halter in his hand, which he called "papa's neckcloth," now looking at his father blowing soap-bubbles, bearing the names of his different kingdoms; now with a sabre in his hand, shouting: "I will kill people as papa does!"

Before Napoleon left Paris he enjoined on

his brother Joseph what he should do, in order to secure the future of the King of Rome in the event of his being killed—and again appointed Marie Louise as regent.

The thunder of the guns aroused the old soldier, and even his bitterest foes—among them Madame de Staël—wished him to conquer his enemies, and restore independence to the land.

But he no longer possessed the prestige that had followed him in his youth ; and his almost superhuman efforts now were fruitless, in view of inflexible, superior powers.

He went to see the ex-Empress Josephine before he left, and wrote to her from the seat of war :

" I have sought for death again and again, I have no need to fear it, for in my actual position it would be a blessing to me ! "

On 9th February the enemy's army was only twelve miles from the capital ; but in the course of a week Napoleon had driven them back some fifty miles, at the same time capturing large quantities of military stores, and sixty-eight guns, while five generals and 28,000 men were made prisoners. Thirty-two standards, taken from the enemy, were immediately sent to Paris, to show what they had been able to do.

In the meantime, a congress had been held in Châtillon to negotiate peace ; and early in February Napoleon looked upon this with

favour, and gave his minister, Caulaincourt, full powers as to conceding to the demands of the hostile rulers. The affair dragged on and on, for Metternich was in secret treaty with other hostile ministers as to the maintenance, or fall, of Napoleon's dynasty.

The Prussian chancellor, Hardenberg, wished to see the Bourbons on the throne of France, but, at the same time, he would not have Prussian blood shed on their account. He was therefore not disinclined to make peace with Napoleon, on condition that France should be restricted to her confines of 1792.

The Russian minister, Nesselrode, dissented from Hardenberg, and required on behalf of his master that the question should be discussed in the capital. It was Alexander's intention to maintain a Russian governor in Paris; by this means he thought to keep all expressions of opinion in check, and render Napoleon's deposition irrevocable.

Metternich shared the views of the Prussian minister that the efforts of all the fighting powers would be rewarded, if France reverted to the old limits, and Francis of Austria would shed no blood to reinstate the Emperor. "If Napoleon brings about his own fall," he added, "Austria will not permit any but the head of the Bourbons to take possession of the crown!"

Alexander I. of Russia would rather have seen Charles John (Bernadotte), the Crown Prince of

Sweden, ruler in France, but Metternich gave him to understand that not one of the other foreign governments would consent to this choice. England had placed herself on the side of Prussia and Austria, and the victories gained by Napoleon, 10th February and 14th, had at last shaken Austria's power of resistance.

On 23rd February the ex-King Joseph wrote to his brother: "I gather that a battle is imminent. Whatever the result may be, the present situation is untenable."

Both Joseph and Caulaincourt entreated him to yield to the claims of his opponents, but his late success had weakened any former resolve to give in. When an adjutant brought him a fresh suggestion from the Congress, he curtly replied that their dishonourable terms might be offered to the Bourbons!

He required Marie Louise to beg the Emperor of Austria to separate himself from the other rulers. She wrote to her father, but he replied as evasively to her as he had done to his son-in-law.

"If I were alone in the contest with Napoleon," he wrote, "it would be far easier to come to terms with him. But a separate 'peace' with Austria would be useless to him, it would simply ruin him. I shall never withdraw myself from the Allies, whose sole aim is to further the common weal. If the Emperor wishes for peace, let him do what is demanded of him, to obtain

it! The greatest service you can possibly render your husband, your son and your new fatherland is to strengthen this my friendly, nay, my fatherly, counsel." [1]

The Châtillon Congress dispersed, 19th March, without the slightest result.

Up to 15th March Napoleon might have saved his crown. His opponents had assured him, again and again, that they had no wish to move a finger in favour of the old dynasty, which even Frenchmen themselves did not desire. "I have no opinion of the Bourbons," Alexander of Russia had exclaimed; "I don't know them!"

As the discussions had ended in nothing, it was at length decided that the downfall of Napoleon was the only thing that could bring about lasting rest to Europe.

The adherents of Louis XVIII. displayed eager activity. Princes of the house of Bourbon resident in England hastened to the Continent, and the Allied Powers secretly informed the Comte d'Artois that he had better fix his headquarters on such a spot where he would be sure of the protection of their troops.

[1] This letter from Francis I. to Marie Louis is dated 10th March 1814, is in the handwriting of Metternich, and without the Emperor's signature.

## CHAPTER XII

Napoleon fears the Fate of Astyanax for his Son—The King of Rome's unwillingness to leave the Tuileries

ALTHOUGH the King of Rome was only three years old, he understood a great deal of what was going on.

"Nobody can resist Napoleon," he said, "therefore everyone shall obey his son!"

He was getting passionate and exacting, giving his governess infinite trouble to control his violence, by not giving in to him herself, nor allowing her servants to yield to his whims.

The child occupied the first storey of the Tuileries, and people liked to assemble under his windows, while he himself delighted in watching the soldiers on the Place in front of the palace.

His Uncle Joseph indulged him by letting him wear a uniform with a three-cornered hat, and go with him to salute the National Guard. The sudden change from quiet to the noise of manœuvres, the talking as he drew near, of which he caught odd bits, and the anxious looks on most faces, naturally excited him He cried and tossed about in his sleep; and when asked what was the matter, he always said he had been dreaming about his dear father—but he would never tell *what* it was about.

The Emperor's thoughts were never absent from the fate that would overtake the King of Rome if once the enemy got possession of the capital.

On 18th February he had written to his brother Joseph, urging him most earnestly never to let the Empress, nor the King of Rome, fall into the hands of the enemy. "You may be sure," he wrote, "that, in such a case, Austria would act an unselfish part, and carry them both off to Vienna, with a handsome revenue. . . . If I die, my son and the regent Empress must not be made prisoners, but retreat, even to the very last village, with the last of my army. As for myself, I would rather my son were killed than see him brought up in Vienna, as an Austrian prince! And I think so well of the Empress that I am convinced she agrees with me, as far as it is possible for a woman and a mother.

"I never saw *Andromache* on the stage without bewailing the fate that befell Astyanax, who survived the downfall of his house, and thinking what a blessing it would have been for him if he had not outlived his father!"

On 16th March he wrote again to his brother: "In connection with the instructions which I gave you, and remembering all I have repeated in my letters, under any circumstances you must hinder the capture of the King of Rome and the Empress by the enemy. It may happen that my movements will prevent news reaching

you during several days. Should the Allies approach Paris so rapidly, that resistance would be impossible, send them away at once, in the direction of the Loire, accompanied by the highest officials, ministers and President of the council, with Baron de la Bouillerie, and all state moneys. Don't forsake my son! Remember I would rather have him thrown into the Seine, than know him to be in the hands of the foes of France. The fate that overtook Astyanax, the prisoner of the Greeks, has always seemed to me the most piteous in history!"

At the close of March, it was many days since news had been received from the Emperor, and it was a mere matter of conjecture as to whether he was approaching Paris or retreating far from the capital. The Empress remained in the Tuileries with her son, her suite and a few friends, apparently calm and untroubled.

But one evening she ordered the Minister of Police, the Duke of Rovigo, to accompany her to a window recess, when she asked him if he had recently had a letter from the Emperor, and on his reply that he had had nothing, she told him that she had had news, adding:

"It will naturally surprise you that Marshal Blücher has sent me this. According to his account, it was found among several other letters, in the hands of a courier, who was taken prisoner by the enemy. Let me speak openly to you! I am in the deepest anxiety as to what

will result from this mischance. The Emperor always used to write to me in cipher; now he has not done so, and it is the first time that he has ever written to me about his plans. It is horrible that this letter should have fallen into the hands of the enemy!"

Napoleon announced that it was his intention to move eastward, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy. He reassured his wife as to the results, and encouraged her not to be alarmed if she did not hear from him for some days, and closed with the words: "This step will either save or destroy me!"

The letter determined the hostile leaders to change their plans, and march directly on Paris.

The unrest in the city naturally increased, when it was known that the enemy was so rapidly approaching; but the people were not even unanimous. Some shouted "Hurrah!" for the Russians, whom they called their deliverers, and a strong Royalist party sprang up suddenly to unfold the standard of the Bourbons.

King Joseph was at his wits' end, and Marie Louise felt herself forsaken, for she had no confidence in her husband's brothers. She knew what difficulties they had put in his path; and, during the few years she had been in France, she had watched him unfriendly with them all.

The Government decided that Paris must be prepared for a siege, and that the King of Rome and his mother must either leave at once—or

stay where they were. There were cogent reasons for them to remain; for if they left the capital, the way would be clear for the Bourbons.

Nobody, either in France or abroad, suspected the Empress of warmer feelings for her father than for her husband and child. She was not loved, but respected, and it would be to her advantage, now, that she was an Austrian princess, for the Parisians supposed that no bomb would reach the Emperor's daughter, and that her presence would restrain the soldiers from plundering and burning the city.

The National Guard was ready to die for her and the Emperor's son, according to their vow; and Queen Hortense hastened to the Tuileries to encourage her sister-in-law.

"I only wish *I* were the King of Rome's mother," she exclaimed. "I would soon inspire the Parisians with the determination that moves me now!"

The Empress saw that Hortense was right, and, as the majority of the ministers held the same opinion, she determined to go to the council chamber, holding her son by the hand, and call upon the people to defend their city.

But King Joseph appeared on the scene, and read letters from Napoleon, containing orders that the King of Rome and his mother should leave Paris on the approach of the enemy.

The Emperor had never allowed his wife the chance of acting independently: his will had

been her law. The letters awoke surprise and irresolution, but neither she nor the ministers thought of opposing his orders. It was agreed that she and the child, with the Government, should leave the following morning for Rambouillet, and that King Joseph should remain in the capital, to resist the enemy as long as possible.

The preparations for departure were made with the greatest haste, and those who might be crossing La Place du Carrousel in the night from the 28th to the 29th of March would see lights behind the curtains of the Tuileries, where the ladies-in-waiting were moving busily from one room to another; horses were already harnessed, and costly articles were being packed in waggons.

It was eight o'clock when the travelling carriage drove up, but the Empress put off the start from hour to hour, both she and her companions hoping against hope that something would happen to render their departure unnecessary.

Then a loud noise was heard from the gardens, and several officers of the National Guard rushed into the room to beseech the Empress to remain, trying to make her understand that the fall of the dynasty would be the inevitable consequence of her flight, and eagerly repeating that they would protect her and her son.

Their devotion was touching—she felt they were right, and she hoped, even at this last hour,

that some message would come from Napoleon to prevent the sad journey.

In the meantime, eleven o'clock struck, and not a word had come. Then the Minister of War said firmly that the Empress must start at once, or risk falling into the hands of the Russians.

But the heir to the throne refused to follow his mother, or leave the Tuileries, clinging to the banisters, the doorposts, the carpets or the curtains.

"I will not forsake my house," he cried. "Papa is away, therefore it is I who am master."

The chief equerry took him by the arm, but he fought, and continued to shriek: "I will not go to Rambouillet. . . . It's a horrible place! I will stay here!" His governess and the equerry had finally to put him into the carriage by force.

A crowd of wondering folk had gathered outside. Not one uttered a word—the only sound to be heard was the sobbing of the King of Rome.

## CHAPTER XIII

Napoleon in Fontainebleau—Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, deserts him

THE following evening Napoleon arrived with post-horses at a little village about five miles from Paris, racked with anxiety, for he knew that the enemy was approaching his capital. He was met by General Belliard, with news of the flight of the Empress and the surrender of Paris.

" Six hours too late, and everything lost ! " he shouted, in despair, finally turning into the little wayside post-house, where he passed the night on a chair.

In the meantime the Czar of Russia and the King of Prussia had taken up their quarters in his capital, and already made preparations for his deposition. He himself went to Fontainebleau the following morning, where the remainder of his army was encamped, for he still had 60,000 men at his disposal, who were ready to fight or die for him.

But his generals were dissatisfied, and on 2nd April Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, came to urge him to renounce his throne in favour of the King of Rome ; but Napoleon was far from willing to listen to the suggestion, and when he reviewed his troops the following morning, and

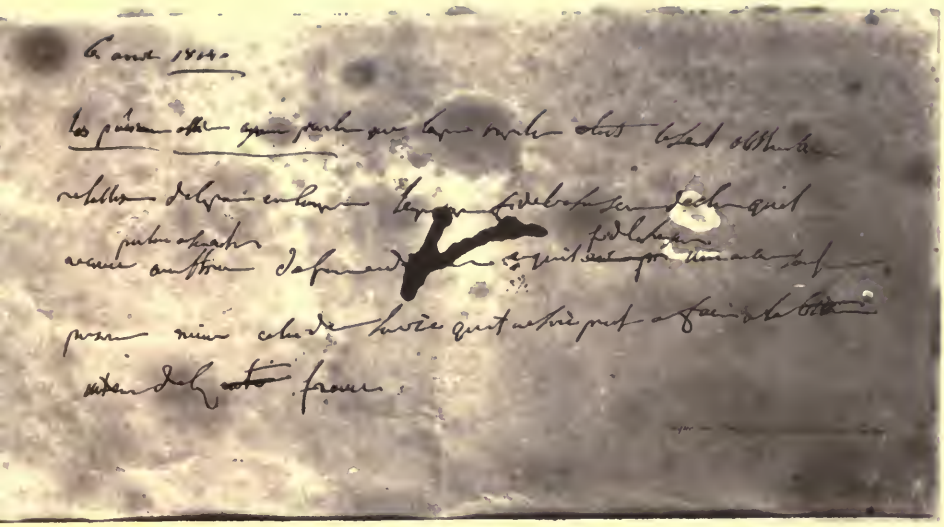
heard the shouts of his soldiers : " Long live the Emperor ! To Paris, to Paris ! " his face beamed and the old war spirit was aroused. He called together his Guard, and bid them chastise and drive the enemy from the city.

But then—five of his marshals came forward and demanded on their own account, and on that of the other leaders, that he should lay down his crown at once ; and the day following he was told that the largest part of his army refused to go with him.

After some hesitation he let himself be persuaded to sign a document in favour of his son.[1]

The marshals, who bore the news to the Czar of Russia, maintained that the army would never submit to be ruled by Bourbons, and that Europe must be content if the grandson of Francis I. of Austria became Emperor of France. Alexander was disposed to agree to this ; but, in the midst of the discussion, he received the news that Marmont had gone over to the enemy with the whole of his men. He had been with the Emperor in each one of his campaigns ; had distinguished himself in

[1] The wording of the first abdication is thus : " As the allied powers have published in their proclamation that the Emperor Napoleon is the sole hindrance to the restoration of peace in Europe, the said Emperor declares that, faithful to the oath he has taken, he is prepared to renounce the crown, France, yea, even his life, to promote the welfare of the land—still, without influencing thereby either his son's rights, the regency of the Empress or the institutions of the Empire."



56 PALAIS DE FONTAINEBLEAU – *Fac-simile de l'Abdication de Napoleon 1er*

Photo Braun & Cie 25 · IX · 34 ·

MUSÉES NATIONAUX • PARIS • ÉDITION DES
PALAIS DU LOUVRE

Italy and Egypt, at Marengo, and at Wagram, and had fought like a hero at Lützen, Bautzen, Dresden and Leipzic. It was only a few days previously that he had defended the outposts of Paris.

Talleyrand had tried to tempt him to forsake his master, but to each suggestion he had replied that he would die by his master's side.

The party who had gone over to the Bourbons sent one messenger after another to the marshal, and, little by little, he began to waver, when the Austrian Prince Schwarzenberg communicated with him, and he finally agreed to surrender his troops. They belonged to the Emperor's firmest adherents, and if their leader had not proved false, his son would have been proclaimed ruler.

This desertion was disastrous to the cause of Napoleon.

On hearing the news, Alexander suddenly exclaimed that it was impossible to sanction the abdication, unless it applied also to the Imperial family and their descendants ; and, for his part, he should persist in not entertaining one thought as to a Napoleon II. The French marshals fell under the influence of Marmont's treachery, and a cessation of arms was signed, without the consent of Napoleon, who had to bear the bitter humiliation of handing over the command of his troops to Marshal Berthier, who had offered his services to the Provisional Government.

On April 5th Napoleon renounced the throne of France and Italy for himself and his descendants, and the final agreement, by which he was to have Elba, and Marie Louise Parma, was brought to him the following day.

He had been living in such a whirl of activity during the last few weeks, that he had found no leisure to reflect on the past, or contemplate the future. Now, when the feverish excitement had resolved itself into idleness, he could grasp the extent of his reverses. The day that the treaty was handed to him he called for a pistol—but the ball had been first extracted.

The following night he roused his servant, and told him to light a fire—after which he was heard writing, incessantly tearing up the papers written.

On his return from Russia he had brought some strong opium, which he always carried on his person. He emptied the bottle that night, and none can say if he did it to lull agonising internal pains—inherited from his father—or if death from poison was his motive.

When he appeared at noon next day, his face was drawn and deadly white, but he forbade his servant to tell anyone that his master had been ill.

Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum, found him crouching over the fire, with his hands up to his head; and it was not till half-an-hour had passed that he looked up and saw the marshal,

who was holding the document. He raised himself and calmly signed it—after which he said: "I thank you for seeing to my last business, and I am distressed that I have nothing but words to offer to you, in order to express my gratitude."

However, he told his servant to fetch a Turkish sword, which he gave to him. "This is Mourad Bey's sabre," he added. "I wore it at the battle of Mount Tabor, April 1799. Carry it in memory of me!"

## CHAPTER XIV

Marie Louise and the King of Rome in Orleans—The Government recovers the Things that the Empress had taken from the Capital—Letters from Marie Louise to her Father—Return Journey to Rambouillet

MARIE LOUISE and her companions had spent the first night at Rambouillet and had then driven on to Chartres. In addition to her son, his governess and the Duchesse de Montebello, she was accompanied by the Chancellor Cambacérès, by the President of the Senate, four ladies of the court, chamberlains and equerries; also, by a large staff of servants.

Following her own carriage, came the coronation coach, and a number of others, bearing the Imperial arms, containing coin, the Crown diamonds, the Emperor's plate, books from the Imperial archives and costly furniture.

She knew nothing as to the fate of Napoleon, or of the capital.

King Joseph, who had left Paris shortly after her, arrived at Chartres in the course of the night; and the following day he came up with his sister-in-law at Vendôme, from whence he wrote to Napoleon:

"SIRE!—The Empress has just left for Blois, where she wishes to remain over to-morrow, in

order to give her suite a little rest. She is far more calm and courageous than one would expect for a woman of her age ! ”

The journey to Blois was distressing. The roads were steeped in water, rain fell in torrents, and the heavy waggons sank deep in the mud.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when she drove into the little town, with her son, her mother-in-law, who had joined her, and the members of her suite. She put up at the Council House ; while the citizens and officials of the town opened their doors for Madame Letitia and her sons, also for the ladies and gentlemen in attendance. The inhabitants were full of pity for the homeless court, and most of them willingly offered their house, their room, or just a bed, to the guests.

In the middle of this confusion, Cambacérès granted solemn audiences, but it was evident the ministers had no power. The Empress was present at the meetings, and received the chief officials of the town.

Even on 7th April, she did not know whether the enemies had invested Paris, or if Napoleon had abdicated.

One of her ladies, Madame Durand, who had papers entrusted to her on leaving Paris, at length told her the facts that had not reached her.

She was terribly alarmed, and exclaimed : “ Then those who advised me not to leave Paris

were right. My father's soldiers would never have driven me away ! "

And, as a drowning man clings to a straw, she clung to the tenderness which her father had shown to her in her childish days.

" How is it then possible that my father can allow this ? " she repeated, twenty times a day. " When he placed me on the throne of France, he vowed that he would always maintain my right to it."

She could speak of nothing to all who came in her way but of her disappointment in the French. In Blois she was always in tears, asking advice from each and all ; till at last her health was really giving way, owing to her hysterical condition.

Most of the provinces were more in sympathy with the Imperial house than with the returning Bourbons, and the wish was echoed from many quarters that the King of Rome should be proclaimed Emperor. It is certain that the army would have yielded on the least encouragement, and hoisted their ruler on their shields.

Madame Durand entreated the Empress to return to Paris before any member of the old Royalist house could have had time to arrive. She assured her the return journey would be easy, for she had come in a post-chaise followed by a single servant, and she had only needed to show her passport for leave to move on at once.

But the Duchesse de Montebello opposed

Madame Durand. Ungrateful towards Marie Louise, as the Duchesse de Polignac had been to Marie Antoinette, she was only waiting for a fitting opportunity to forsake her.

Even if, like many others, she did not aspire to a post at the Bourbon court, she yet wished to hold the door open to the good-will of the royal family. Her main aim was to loosen the bond between Napoleon and his wife, and conduct her inexperienced friend back to the Emperor of Austria.

And now, as before, the Comtesse de Montesquiou, high-minded and straight, was in contrast to the duchess. She was the only one among all the ladies attending on Marie Louise, who had any real reason for approaching the Bourbons, on account of the traditions of her family, and the services which her forefathers had rendered the royal house. But she had sworn fidelity to Napoleon, and she was prepared to do her duty, in spite of the personal sacrifice it would cost her.

She maintained that it was the duty of the Empress to go to Fontainebleau, and in this opinion she was strongly supported by the secretary, Baron Méneval, and one of the ladies of the court, the Comtesse de Luçay.

Marie Louise gave in for one moment that she ought to go, even if Napoleon had not bade her come ; but in the next she was sure that it would be far better for herself and her son that she

should consult her father as to his views for their future.

General Ségur relates in his Mémoires :

" My mother-in-law, Madame de Luçay, had persuaded her to leave Blois for Fontainebleau, and the carriage in which she was to travel was already waiting by the secret steps when the Duchesse de Montebello was announced. Confused by this unexpected visit, the Empress suggested that my mother-in-law should go into an adjoining room. The door remained open, and Madame de Luçay distinctly heard that the duchess was persuading Marie Louise to retract her decision."

That she did not go was partly Napoleon's fault, for a distinct order from him would certainly have been obeyed. Instead of which, he wrote her a despairing letter after his abdication, in which he advised her to seek counsel from her father.

On good Friday, 8th April, the ex-Kings Joseph and Jérome rushed into her room to tell her that the troops were approaching the town, and that she *must* leave instantly, with the King of Rome, for the other side of the Loire. As she refused to obey, they tried to lead her away by force. She screamed for help, officers came to her aid, and the plan was frustrated.

Immediately after her brothers-in-law had left, she was plunged into fresh anxiety by the arrival of the Russians, and her husband's letter had

clearly shown to her that no help could be expected from them. She feared to be taken prisoner, and therefore preparations during the night between the 8th and 9th of April were rapidly made. She knew she must pass several of the Russian outposts, and trembled lest her waggons should be plundered; hoping, at the same time, that she herself would not be molested. She sent for the Crown diamonds and determined to wear a portion of them, but the famous "Regent" diamond was fastened to Napoleon's sword, and, as it would have been impossible to conceal the heavy weapon, Méneval broke it in two, and the Empress hid the stones in her work-bag.

She was overtaken on the way by Cossacks, who plundered several of her waggons, until one of Schuvaloff's adjutants stopped them, and forced the soldiers to return the booty they had taken.

It was the evening of Easter Tuesday when Marie Louise and her son entered Orleans, where they were met by the authorities, both civil and military, and the National Guard was posted between the city gate and the bishop's palace, where they lodged.

It was known that the Emperor had abdicated, but Louis XVIII. was not yet King of France; for, at the corners of the streets, the last proclamations issued in Blois, and bearing the signature of Marie Louise, were still plainly seen. She was

treated as the Empress, and greeted with shouts of "Long live the Emperor! Long live the Empress!"

In spite of the precautions of the Comtesse de Montesquiou to keep her charge away from all that might excite him, he had heard and seen much that would cling to his memory. He used to say that Blücher was "his worst enemy" and that Louis XVIII. had taken his father's place, and was also keeping all *his* toys—he just hoped that he would be forced to give them back!

At last he had his pages again, dressed as sailors, whom he exercised, cane in hand, in the palace grounds, when numbers came in from the town to see him, and some to take him in their arms and fondle him, by permission of his governess.

On leaving Paris, Marie Louise had brought with her Napoleon's private money, two million francs of which she kept in her own carriage, and ten millions which were packed in the freight waggons. But, under pretext that these millions belonged to the State, the temporary Government sent a commissioner to Orleans who was to bring back everything to the capital: the silver service, the Emperor's own possession; a large number of rings and boxes, intended for presents; all his linen, marked "N" and a crown. Then, in addition to all these, things in daily use in Orleans were also taken from them, and during the last

few days of their stay the Empress saw herself obliged to borrow cups and plates.

The money and the Crown diamonds were handed over to the commissioners, who sought in vain for the "Regent," and when it was finally discovered in the work-bag, the representative of the new Government made the Empress distinctly understand that he was confident she meant to appropriate it.

She wrote thus to her father:

"The Emperor goes to Elba, and I have told him that nothing shall induce me to leave here before I have met you and learnt what you advise me to do. Please send me a reply, for my son's sake. I have resolved to do all that you consider advisable. I know that in my name you have been asked to give me the Duchy of Tuscany. But, be assured that it was done without my knowledge! I know that you think far too much of us not to be anxious as to the fate of both my son and myself. . . . The only thing I crave for is rest, which is necessary for my health! Therefore, dearest papa, I beg you to start and allow me to meet you. My position becomes daily more difficult and more painful. I may be taken from here against my will! But I can explain things better by word of mouth! Do send me a reply quickly, for I am dying of anxiety!"

The following day she again wrote to her father: "God knows how I shall get away from

here! It would be such a comfort to see you first. I have no hope left for happiness in this world. All that I want is to live in peace."

The opponents of the deposed Emperor were quite aware how much depended upon her attitude; for, assisted by her, his adherents might bring about a reversion in favour of the King of Rome. In spite of her reiterated wish to see her father, contained in each one of her feverishly written letters, she had no intention of being divorced from Napoleon. It was therefore imperative that every hindrance should be put in the way of a meeting, and that she should be persuaded to have done with France for ever.

The Emperor Francis sent her no reply; but there was a letter from Metternich that found her in Orleans, in which he begged her to return to Rambouillet, telling her that the Emperor of Austria was either there, as he wrote, or would shortly arrive; he also added that she must hasten if she wished to see him. He moreover assured her that Napoleon had consented to the journey, and that it had been arranged she should have her own duchy, to which her son would be heir. He closed the letter with the confident assurance that she might trust both for the present and the future.

She resolved to start at once. Her ladies and gentlemen in waiting, to whom she gave souvenirs, bade her farewell; and with some emotion she begged them not to forget her.

It was known, before she started, that it was settled she should become Duchess of Parma ; so those who, but an hour previously, had taken leave of the Empress of France, came back to wish her happiness in an unimportant little Italian state.

A detachment of the Imperial Guard accompanied her from Orleans, but, at the first relay, Angerville exchanged this escort for Cossacks. Every road was guarded by Russian troops, who held their long lances raised aloft round her carriage.

## CHAPTER XV

Marie Louise and the Emperor Francis in Rambouillet—Letters from the Emperor Francis, and from Napoleon —The Last Days in France

NAPOLEON had given his wife foolish advice when he urged her to return to him. On her arrival at Rambouillet, her father was not there. She just spoke to some few Austrian soldiers, who were in the palace, and showed them her son. Then Queen Hortense came from Paris to see her, but the meeting was not a success —Josephine's daughter blamed her for leaving Napoleon.

She waited four long days in anxiety and worry before her father arrived, accompanied by Metternich, and then burst into tears as she met him on the steps with her boy, whom she put into his arms. The Emperor kissed him and said he was the prettiest child he had ever seen.

But there was no mutual feeling, for when the lad had to go he said to the servant : " I shall have to do with the Emperor of Austria ! " But this strange man, with his long face and cold expression, found no favour in the little one's eyes, and when he got back to his governess he said to her :

" How ugly my grandfather is, Mama Quiou."

Although Francis I. and Metternich were at one as to Marie Louise never returning to Napoleon, they did not dare to approach the subject directly, and during the long conversation between father and daughter it was only the question of a separation for a short time ; urging, and that on her child's account, it would be prudent for her not to see her husband.

The Emperor and his minister spent the night at the castle, and before they drove away next morning, they had persuaded the Empress to leave for Vienna as quickly as possible, with the encouraging suggestion that later on she could reside, by turns, in Parma or Elba ! And Francis had buoyed up his son-in-law too with this delusion ; in fact, they appeared to be on a friendly footing, for he wrote thus to him from Rambouillet :

" My Brother and dear Son-in-law,—My tender care for my daughter, the Empress, induced me to see her. I only arrived a few hours ago, and grieve to note that her health has suffered considerably since my last visit. I have therefore decided that she should return to her family for a few months, to get the rest and peace she so greatly needs. Your Majesty has given her far too many proofs of your genuine devotion for me to doubt now that you will share my wishes, and accept my decision. As soon as my daughter is stronger, she will

take possession of her own home, and will thus be nearer to your Majesty. It is certainly unnecessary that I should assure you that your son will be received as a member of my family, and that during his residence in my empire I shall care both for him and his mother. Your Imperial Majesty's Brother-in-Law and Father-in-Law.

"FRANCIS."

These words in no wise expressed his real feelings, for five days previously he had written to Metternich: "The first and foremost point is to get Napoleon away from France, and God grant that it may be far, far away! . . . I do not agree in the choice of Elba for his residence. . . . He would be too near to France, *and* Europe."

Napoleon was alone in Fontainebleau, and many of his faithful soldiers were encamped near the castle, seeking for a glimpse of him, their ideal. Most of his friends and attendants had deserted him; but he trusted in his wife, and continued to send her long loving letters. He had dreamt of the life of a simple citizen with her and his child. Now, when that was too late, he longed for her to go to him.

Before the news had reached him that Marie Louise had left Orleans, he had sent General Chambronne to escort her and the King of Rome to Fontainebleau. When he heard that she had left, and had already seen her father,

he was furious, and grasped that every hope of seeing her and the child, before he left for Elba, had been cut off. The day before he left Fontainebleau he wrote as follows :—

"My good Louise,—I have received your letter acquainting me with all your griefs, arising from those which I myself suffer ! I am glad to see that Corvisart cheers you, I am grateful to him ; and by his noble conduct he justifies the good opinion I have always had of him. Tell him so from me, and ask him to send me frequent news of your health. Later on I should like you to go to Aix, as Corvisart advises. I pray you may feel strong, for my sake and that of the boy, who needs your care. I am leaving for Elba, and will write next from thence, doing my very utmost to meet you soon. Write often to me. Send your letters to the vice-King, or to your uncle, who, if rumour speaks true, has been created Grand Duke of Tuscany. Farewell, my good Louise ! "

Early the next morning he sent another letter to his wife, ending with these words :

"You can always count on my fortitude and calmness, and on the friendship of your husband towards yourself. A kiss for the little King ! "

The last days in Rambouillet were painful for both the Empress and her suite. The Duchess of Montebello, after much persuasion, had

finally consented to remain for a short time with her friend. But—" I ardently wish that I was once more with my own children, and in peace," repeated so incessantly, finally roused the ire of her patient mistress.

The ladies who were to accompany the King of Rome had no time allowed them to settle their own private affairs, or to say farewell to their relations and friends. Just a few acquaintances came from Paris to say good-bye to the ex-Empress, but the Comtesse de Montesquiou alone received them, and took them into her own rooms to see—all with saddened looks —the child of the exiled Emperor.

It was only with great difficulty and persistent interference on the part of the Austrian embassy that the new Government consented to hand over the personal belongings of Marie Louise. It was the same with the trifles belonging to her son : his wardrobe, the little carriage which his aunt, Caroline Murat, had given him, and twenty-five books on the " bringing up of children " ! These things, with the toys he had taken about with him, constituted the fortune of the King of Rome when he left France. He was not allowed to possess the cradle presented to him by the city of Paris.

# PART II

## THE PRISONER IN VIENNA

"Je n'ai jamais vu représenter *Andromaque* que je n'aie plaint le sort d'Astyanax survivant à sa maison, et que je n'aie regardé comme un bonheur pour lui de ne pas survivre à son père."—NAPOLEON.

## CHAPTER I

Marie Louise returns to Austria with her Son—The King of Rome and the People of Vienna—Count Adam Neipperg—Marie Louise in Aix

MARIE LOUISE had left France, 2nd May 1814, accompanied, in addition to her son, by her secretary, Méneval, her chamberlain, Bausset, the Duchesse de Montebello, and a lady-in-waiting, the Comtesse de Brignole. Then twenty-five carriages, with attendants and luggage, followed the Imperial coach.

Little Napoleon had already found out a great difference as far as he was concerned. "I can easily see that I am no longer a king," he said: "I've got no pages!"

The archduchess was awaited with impatience in Austria, and the Empress Maria Ludovica met her on the way, when she graciously invited the Duchess of Montebello to sit with herself and her stepdaughter in the Imperial carriage.

The Viennese had not forgotten the sacrifice made by Marie Louise when she married that hateful Napoleon; and as she approached Schönbrunn, on the evening of 21st May, she was greeted with shouts of welcome. Her brothers and uncles awaited her at the castle steps, her sisters in their private rooms, where they warmly

welcomed her, with congratulations on her return home.

Ten minutes later her son, whom they looked for with no little curiosity, arrived, and his open countenance, and pretty manners, created a pleasant surprise, as a likeness was quickly seen between him and the dearly loved Emperor Joseph. He was good-looking, forsaken and unhappy, while the smile with which he responded to all greetings gained him the hearts of the people.

The enthusiasm was not less when he was taken into the hall, where the court was assembled, and the grand ladies kissed his hand, as they exclaimed: "Long live the Prince of Parma!"

The wave of sympathy that met the homecoming of the archduchess quickly flowed towards her son, and during the next few weeks half Vienna made a pilgrimage to Schönbrunn to catch a glimpse of little Napoleon, and express their opinion that he resembled his Austrian relations, but was far better-looking!

"He belongs to our family, and we have satisfied ourselves that he is no supposititious child!"

Marie Louise longed for rest after her overwhelming excitement; and by degrees she accustomed herself to her former position, and if she suffered under the great change, the world was not aware of it. Her uncle, the Archduke

John, who watched her closely, wrote in his diary: "She feels it and conceals it!"

At first she was much more of a Frenchwoman than an Austrian, and talked incessantly of Napoleon and France. She completely ignored the German ladies and gentlemen in waiting, and, while the Duchesse de Montebello was with her, spent whole days in her society. If it was hinted to her that her son resembled her family she always replied: "No; he is like the Emperor! Nobody allows it here, but it is certain that he resembles him, both in appearance and character!"

The heartiness, with which she had been welcomed, soon turned to icy coldness, and she was blamed, on all sides, for behaving just as though Napoleon was still master in France. It is related that she wanted to go to Elba, and then wept as she realised each altered condition. Her Austrian servants complained because she had meals at different hours to those followed in Schönbrunn; the Viennese considered she dressed too conspicuously, and was haughty, looking down upon their manners and customs.

"She's no longer Austrian," they said: "she's spoilt: she's French!"

Her family had looked for a more motherly union with her child in the retired life at Schönbrunn, and had arranged that the rooms formerly occupied by the kings of Rome should adjoin her own. But she rarely went to him, leaving

him entirely in the hands of the Comtesse de Montesquiou.

The ex-Empress had fixed her hopes on her father for more reasons than one. He was expected on 5th June, and early in the morning she drove out to be the first to welcome him. The Emperor was pleased, got into her carriage, and arrived at Schönbrunn seated by her side. But he did not let her indulge in any sort of illusion as to the political deference he meant to show.

"All that I have belongs to you as my daughter," he said; "but I do not recognise you as Empress."

There is not the least doubt that her thoughts on her return were centred on her husband, and that she had not abandoned all idea of meeting him again. She said to the French ladies and gentlemen still with her that, when she was at Parma, she should do what she liked, and travel where she wished.

Napoleon wrote kindly to her, constantly expecting that she would visit him with their boy, according to her promise. But the plan was opposed by most members of the family, though approved of by her grandmother, Maria Carolina of Naples, although it was the French Emperor who had helped to rob her of her throne. She saw her daily, was kind to the child and his governess, and strongly advised her granddaughter to go to Elba.

"Even if you have to knot your sheets together and jump out of the window to get to your husband, it is your duty to do it."

But such energetic action was not in accordance, either with the character of Marie Louise or with the views she entertained of all that had happened—neither had she inherited the old queen's courage.

When they were in Rambouillet, the Emperor Francis had promised that after a short stay at home, she should go to Aix and take the waters. Here the Duchesse de Montebello, who had very quickly returned to Paris, had promised to visit her; and the hope of meeting her again was not the least among her reasons for reminding her father of his promise.

Her wish was fulfilled, although the ministers and the court disapproved, but Francis was firm in his decision that she must leave her son at Schönbrunn.

It was anticipated in France that this visit to Aix was but a step to a meeting between her and Napoleon. Nearly all the guests at Aix were Bonapartists,[1] and she drove out daily with the Imperial arms on her coach, and the Duchesse de Montebello, granddaughter of Lannes, by her side.

The adherents to the Empire, who had reluc-

[1] Among others, Isabey, who painted a portrait of Marie Louise, and Talma, who declaimed poems glorifying Napoleon.

tantly submitted to the new *régime*, began to hope, and the reports that Austria favoured Napoleon gained more and more credence; which made Louis XVIII. tremble for his feeble throne, which might fall to pieces with the tiniest shock.

At the suggestion of Prince Schwarzenberg, Count Adam Neipperg, the only Austrian in her suite, had been chosen to arrange all the journey, and report to the court at Vienna. The Empress had met him in Strassburg in 1810, and also during the same summer at one of the *fêtes* held in Paris on her marriage. In June 1812, when she visited her relations in Prague, he had been one of her twelve gentlemen-in-waiting. But it appears certain that she paid no particular attention to him, either the first, second or third time of meeting.

When he approached her on their arrival at Aix she remarked to Méneval that she thought him repulsive. She looked upon him almost as a jailer; and even in his presence she gave herself no trouble to conceal the disagreeable impression he made upon her. He had opposed Napoleon, both on the field of battle and in the arena of politics. He was a flattering courtier, an excellent musician, and hiding the keenest ambition, behind a mask of assumed modesty.

He had lost an eye in the war, and a scar that reached obliquely across his face was concealed by a black bandage, which gave his countenance

a singular attraction, on account of the contrast between the refined, gentle features and this proof of bravery.

He had eloped with a married woman, made her his wife, and by her he had a large family.

At the time he entered into the service of Marie Louise the court at Vienna had given him a free hand to use every means in his power to divert her thoughts from the fallen Emperor.

The unpleasant impression he had made upon her disappeared, and after five days' intercourse Marie Louise wrote to her father: "Count Neipperg is especially attentive to me, and his manners are attractive"!

Hitherto he had only been received officially, but now that Baron Méneval had left, to spend a few weeks with his wife, Marie Louise was in brisk correspondence with him, and her letters express the confidence she had in her faithful attendant.

She had said that no power on earth should induce her to return to her father's court, as long as the Congress at Vienna was still sitting. In the meanwhile, Neipperg had promised the Emperor of Austria to do his very best to shake this resolution, and prevent her from going to Elba, by urging upon her that, sooner or later, it would wreck the future of her son, if she sought her husband.

On 23rd July Neipperg wrote to the Emperor: "Although her Majesty always speaks with

devotion of Napoleon, she has never expressed the wish to be with him in Elba, and I feel I may confidently assure your Majesty that, if such a journey has been planned, it has not been by those about her. At any rate, no plan is ripe, and it would be very difficult to carry one out."

On 28th July he wrote :

" In quiet conversation, it frequently happens that her Majesty speaks of Napoleon, and she has been so gracious as to say that, although she might be willing to share his fate, forethought for her son must be the first consideration, and it is that which deters her from going ! She will renounce this meeting with Napoleon, and devote herself exclusively to the bringing up of her son."

The former Empress was in an unenviable position. On the one hand, Neipperg strongly urged her not to go to Elba ; on the other hand, Napoleon besought her with prayers to come quickly, and ask advice of nobody. She was touched when the Emperor in his violent manner expressed his longing for wife and child, and there were moments when she longed for death, to free her from the whole thing.

One of the ex-King Joseph's servants, who was on his way to Elba, went to her in disguise, when she entrusted him with a note to the Emperor, and a lock of her hair, which he was to give him on his approaching birthday. All this she kept

secret from Neipperg, neither did she tell him that she had written to Méneval as follows, 15th August:—

"I am very sad and down-hearted to-day. But how could I be glad on 15th August, when I am forced to spend what is a solemn festival to me far away from all those whom I love the best!"

Napoleon thought much of his wife, but infinitely more of his son, the mere mention of whom moved him, and yet he sought any chance of talking of the child.

"I have much of a mother's tenderness," he used to say, "and I am not ashamed to own it!"

And another time:

"It would be impossible for me to believe in attachment to the father, if the children were not loved."

Hostile powers had robbed him of his crown, but they were not justified in destroying his family life; and his father-in-law's efforts to keep wife and son away from him deeply wounded his feelings as a husband and father. Then it was prejudicial to him from the political standpoint, for the behaviour of the Emperor Francis had destroyed all faith in outsiders, that friendship could still exist between himself and the Austrian court.

On 30th August Marie Louise wrote to her father:

"Three days ago I met an officer who handed me a letter from the Emperor, in which he says that I am to go immediately, and alone, to Elba, where he eagerly expects me."

This letter she had shown to Neipperg, and it was probably in accordance with his advice that she replied, the following day, that she dared not go, without the consent of her father.

Napoleon was furious that she refused to come to him, and in his next letter he spoke his mind, and upbraided her in strong language that she had deserted him in misfortune, and separated him from his child.

His violence destroyed the last impulse she had to visit him. She had hitherto been a faithful wife, grateful for his goodness to her, but she had never been seriously in love with him. Now, she seemed to lose control over her own heart, and she was afraid of him; all the more that, in his next letter, he threatened to carry her off by force if she would not join him willingly.

Neipperg had taken his precautions to frustrate such a plan; and on 5th September *he* carried her off, to Switzerland, to the relief of society both in Paris and Aix, where she had been surrounded by the spies of Louis XVIII., who, up to the very last minute, had feared she would yet go to Elba.

Napoleon was sad and disappointed that she

had failed him, and did not scruple to upbraid his father-in-law in severe terms for his inhumanity ; and to Colonel Campbell he expressed his opinion that this separation from his wife and child was a sin against God and man :

" They have torn my son from me, as the conquerors of olden days seized the children of the vanquished—to grace their triumph and adorn their car of victory."

General Bertrand's brother arrived in Elba, bringing with him likenesses, to the delight of the Emperor—and one was of the King of Rome.

" My son," he murmured, in tones of mingled tenderness, pain and longing. " My son," he repeated and, rising, left the room, to shut himself in his study ; looking so worn and sad when he came back he might have been seriously ill.

As a rule he refrained from speaking of his wife, for he could not always control his wrath. He wrote to her, but never renewed his wish to see her.

Marie Louise admired fine scenery, and during her excursions in the Swiss mountains Neipperg was her sole companion. She had a beautiful soprano voice, and he accompanied her. She had been wearied and worried by etiquette while she was an empress. She was free now for the first time.

The count's influence grew day by day : he

was a pleasant travelling companion, an attentive and respectful gentleman-in-waiting.

On 22nd September she wrote to her father from Berne :

" I have received a letter from the Emperor. Nothing of any interest. He simply speaks of his health, without a word as to his wish to see me in Elba. I would not omit telling you that I have heard from him, that you may see I have no secrets from you. If you permit me, I will send you my reply, for you to read it through before I send it to him."

She had always been docile, and her weak character was ready for every impression—she preferred to go in leading-strings.

Napoleon had made her an Empress. Neipperg sought the woman in her ; he came to her at the time she needed him, and gently made her realise that she was an archduchess and a German. Outsiders began to grasp that she had found in him a guide ; who captivated her, and those in the secret discovered that she was in love.

Once he had gained this power over her, there was no room for Napoleon in her affections. The court at Vienna had every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which it had accomplished its task.

" God be praised ! I was fortunate in my choice of a knight," exclaimed the Emperor Francis, when he was told that Neipperg was his daughter's lover.

He had succeeded in removing her from his dangerous son-in-law, who had conquered him so repeatedly, and in depriving his fallen opponent of the one and only comfort he longed for.

## CHAPTER II

The Congress of Vienna—Napoleon's Efforts to keep in touch with his Wife and Child

AFTER an absence of three months, Marie Louise returned to Austria, when the Congress at Vienna was just assembling.

Wonderful preparations had been made in order to receive with proper dignity three kings, a couple of dozen grand dukes and dukes, a large contingent of princes, together with a crowd of ministers, adjutants and courtiers, who followed in their wake.

The restraint which Napoleon had imposed upon Europe was lifted, and one *fête* followed quickly on another; for the hospitality of the Imperial pair was not merely meant to show their court life in all its grandeur, but its aim was, perhaps mainly, to subject all these foreign diplomatists to the will of Austria.[1]

The ex-Empress of France was not present, either at balls or receptions, organised in con-

[1] A drawing of the Congress represents the Czar of Russia driving in a grand coach, with the Emperor of Austria on a back seat; the King of Prussia as outrider; the Emperor Napoleon running on foot behind, and shouting: "Father-in-law! Father-in-law! They've left me outside!" The Emperor Francis putting his head out, and saying: "They've given me a seat in the coach!"

nection with the Congress ; but she received and paid a few private visits, and drove into Vienna each day to see her father.

New clothes were a strong feature in her life, and not a day passed without the arrival of gowns and hats from Paris.

As she could not be present at the entertainments she looked at them, as it were, through the keyhole ; for behind the large hall of the Hofburg there was a balcony, from which it was easy to see and not be observed. Without grasping the position which she herself held after the fall of the Empire, she took up her post in this balcony while a gala feast was being held to celebrate the downfall of Napoleon.

Early in December, she paid a morning call on the Empress of Russia, and while her carriage was waiting for her, some of the passers-by noticed that it bore the Imperial Eagle. As she stepped into the carriage she heard remarks, and hastened the very next day to have the arms removed, and her own initials put in their place.

According to her own account, in the early days at Aix she had longed for her son ; but on her return she was absolutely indifferent to him—and from the diary of the Archduke John we learn that he considered she trampled her motherly duties underfoot.

Maria Carolina of Naples had died during the absence of her granddaughter in Switzerland,

so that Méneval was now the only one who strove to maintain a friendly intercourse between Elba and Schönbrunn; but his efforts were crushed through the opposition of the ex-Empress.

The Comtesse de Montesquiou was amazed that she had willingly neglected the little King in such stirring times, and after the return from Aix she was exceedingly annoyed by her behaviour, and wrote thus to her husband [1]:

"Do not claim it as my duty that I should return to France! As I said before, you would place me in a most painful position, and my conscience would reproach me for the rest of my life. If he had a mother, I would put him into her hands, and I should be blameless. But he has nothing like a mother! This person is more indifferent as to her child's lot than the most careless of the strangers who wait upon him. Besides, those who accompanied him here would return with me, if I were to forsake my post, for it would be impossible for them to put up with a longer stay. While I am here there is someone to comfort them; then, if I leave, they would not know what to do; and, in the end, the poor child would be the one to suffer. . . . We form a little circle, who often weep by his bedside, by no means on account of the good things he has lost—in fact, *I* think that he may be happier now than

[1] Her letter was opened by the police in Vienna, and copied in the office of the Minister of Police.

under former conditions !—but on account of all that he must miss in other ways, the best of all ! "

She wrote to one of her friends :

" When I return to France, I shall long to rest my mind and forget what I have seen, for it is painful to witness what comes before me now ! "

With truly unselfish devotion the Countess tried to make up for the want of his mother's tenderness. She went to the child before he was up, talked to him of his father, and encouraged him to be amiable and kind, especially to all Frenchmen who approached him. His love for his governess had softened his former strong will, and, though there were certainly times when he was obstinate and impatient, he became more gentle, while his big childish eyes had acquired quite a melancholy expression. It struck one that he not only understood how much he had lost, but was in fear as to what else would be taken from him.

His French servant had been dismissed, and replaced by an Austrian, that he might learn German ; then the priest of the French embassy instructed him in Italian.

Now and again he accompanied his mother to Vienna, as, on great occasions, the Empress Maria Ludovica felt bound to notice him, though she took no pains to hide her dislike to the son of " the Corsican robber," and both she and her

brothers-in-law were determined that he should never become the founder of any princely family.

Napoleon had heard not a word from Marie Louise since her return from Switzerland, and naturally had not the faintest suspicion that she gave all his letters to her father, who was brutal enough to read them aloud to the foreign princes, who gloated over the despair of their fallen enemy, in his separation from wife and child.

The uncle of Marie Louise, Grand Duke of Tuscany, in the days of the Confederation of the Rhine had been one of the most frequent and obsequious guests at the French court; and now the ex-Emperor wrote to him—10th October—a forcible letter, complaining that for several months he had not received a word from either wife or son. He enclosed a letter to Marie Louise, earnestly beseeching him to see that it came into her own hands. He further begged permission to allow letters for the Comtesse de Montesquiou to reach Elba through him.

"In spite of circumstances, which have altered so many folk," he added, "I flatter myself that Your Royal Highness has retained some little friendship for me."

The grand duke sent his own letter and that of Marie Louise to the Emperor, who allowed them to remain on his writing-table for many days, finally giving his daughter her own, to which she never replied.

On New Year's Day, 1815, she at last sent him a few lines, in which she said that his son was well, and would shortly be able to write himself. After this she reverted to her former absolute silence, and the only subsequent news that her husband received came from Baron Méneval to General Bertrand; unless he inquired of his banker, or some shopkeeper, if his son was still living.

He was told that the Austrian court was working to compel a divorce between him and Marie Louise, and to bring about a marriage between her and William III. of Prussia, who had recently lost her namesake, Queen Louise. But, as a good Roman Catholic, Francis of Austria had not entertained the idea, and he informed the Papal Court that there was absolutely no ground for the current report.

## CHAPTER III

### Napoleon's Return from Elba

MARIE LOUISE was eagerly longing to get away from Vienna, and become in reality Duchess of Parma. She was encouraged in her wish by Neipperg, who wrote notices to foreign powers on the subject.

Europe had agreed to Parma, Piacenza or Guastalla as her independent home ; and Europe had pledged herself to protect her and her son against any attack on her rights. But, in spite of the agreement at Fontainebleau, the Congress piled up endless difficulties, to hinder the fulfilment of the promises, while the French and Spanish ambassadors fought hard to wrest the rights from her. The least sign of favour towards the former King of Rome aroused uneasiness among the adherents of Louis XVIII., and Talleyrand had written to the King, 13th August 1814 :

" Little Bonaparte is for the moment alone at Schönbrunn. It is evident that the Emperor of Austria is very fond of him, and treats him exactly the same as the archdukes."

But two months later the minister was able to soothe the King with the following notice :—

"Little Bonaparte is no longer treated as in his early days at Vienna. His Order of the Legion of Honour has been taken from him, and replaced by that of St Stephen."

On 19th January 1815 he wrote:

"We have no reason to hope that the Archduchess Marie Louise will be disposed of with a generous allowance, and I venture to repeat to your Majesty that I consider this an important point; it means that, both in the present and in the future, the name of Bonaparte will be erased from the rulers' list."

There were many members of the Congress who showed but scant courtesy to the former Empress, and the English minister entered her salon in riding-boots, whip in hand! The Russian Emperor was the only one who treated her with deference; he frequently drove out to Schönbrunn to pay his respects, and declared openly that he was annoyed not to have preferred the King of Rome to Louis XVIII.

"Let us agree with reference to Parma," said the King of France to the Austrian ambassador in Paris. "In that case, I shall be at one with you as to all the other questions!"

The Emperor of Austria was slack in furthering his daughter's cause; and, to humour Louis XVIII., Metternich quietly undertook to prevent Napoleon's son from ruling, even if his mother did become duchess of the little Italian state.

"If you wish to remain in Parma you must separate yourself from your son," he said to Marie Louise. "You can only do so on condition that he is not your heir! Let him remain in Vienna—let him be an Austrian subject. You can visit him; but he must not go to Parma, just as he is not permitted to enter France."

As usual, Marie Louise was on the point of giving in to the strongest influence; and circumstances seemed to be favouring her decision, for the news that Napoleon had left Elba had just fallen like a bomb among the members of the Congress.

Early in the morning of 7th March Metternich was aroused by his servant, who had brought him a despatch from the Consul at Genoa announcing the flight of the Emperor. The Congress, not to say the whole of Europe, trembled at his return.

As the ex-Empress came in from her walk, she learned that her husband had left his island.

"My poor Louise!" said the Archduke John "I hope, for your sake, and for us all, that he will break his neck."

The news aroused the greatest concern among the Frenchmen who were with her; while she herself was confused with surprise; and for the first few days seemed to be in doubt as to what she wanted, and what she ought to do. Méneval was witness of her painful waves of indecision, when one moment she would say that she

could not return to France, where there was never any rest. But the next she hinted that if Napoleon relinquished his plans of conquest she had reason to believe that no resistance would be offered, if she wished to join him.

The combined rulers unanimously resolved to renew the war, and incredible masses of troops were speedily assembled. And yet, it is possible that the Emperor's cause would not have been lost if his former minister, Talleyrand, had not shown himself the most implacable of foes, who repeated, again and again, that he must be treated as a mad dog, and he insisted that peace with his former master was impossible.

The substance of this declaration, which was issued 30th March, was but a faint echo of the spiteful draft which Talleyrand had submitted to the Congress. But Francis thought the expressions too violent, as they referred to his son-in-law, and it was only after long and stormy debates that it was settled how the declaration was to be worded.

Méneval maintained that Marie Louise was to blame for the hostile conduct of the Congress; for she had written—12th March—to Metternich that she had no ideas as to the plans of the Emperor of France, and that she placed herself unreservedly under the protection of the Allied Powers. After the perusal of this letter, the princes were of opinion that there was no

need to pay any heed to Napoleon's family connections.

In the meanwhile, she had not realised that they would go thus far, and when she saw the consequences of her letter she was vexed that she had written it. Her friend, Countess Lazanski, assures us that she entreated her father to withdraw the declaration, and when the Emperor replied that he was not in a position to do so, she appealed to the King of Prussia, and to the Czar of Russia ; but Alexander told her that her husband was a rebel, and must be treated as such.

Hardly a year had passed since Napoleon renounced his throne ; and his magnificent victories were still the subject of conversation. Proud France had been deeply humiliated since he left, and even his bitterest opponents had felt mortified when the Czar and the King of Prussia rode into Paris.

" I do not think," remarks Chateaubriand, " that any men could look more aggressive than the old Guard, who lined the way when Louis XVIII. entered the city. These heroes, who had conquered Europe, and who had heard many a ball whiz over their heads, were forced to do homage to an old king, whom time—not war !—had made into an invalid, appropriating the Emperor's capital, guarded by Russians, Austrians and Prussians ! "

But many as had formerly been the heroic

deeds of Napoleon, they cannot compare with his triumphal march through France in 1815. Without communication with his adherents, to whom his arrival was as unlooked for as to the careless Royalists, he reconquered his Empire, in the course of a few days, by his own magical personal influence.

When it was known that he had left Elba, the *Moniteur* had the following :—

" The monster has escaped."

The same paper next day called him " the Corsican werewolf." Next day, " the tiger " had shown himself in France ; and the following day " the miserable adventurer " was roaming among the mountains, and " could not possibly escape."

When the " monster " arrived at Grenoble the expression was milder : " the tyrant " made his entry into Lyons, and " the usurper " was approaching the capital.

A few days later the *Moniteur* wrote : " Bonaparte is coming upon us with rapid strides ! " And in the next issue : " Napoleon is expected in Paris to-morrow ! "

On the tenth day the paper announced in heavy type that " His Majesty the Emperor-King Napoleon made his entry into the Tuileries on 20th March."

Louis XVIII. had fled in hot haste from both capital and kingdom.

. . . . . .

Napoleon had previously declared that he

meant to enter Paris on 20th March, the birthday of the King of Rome.

The tricoloured flag was hoisted on the Tuileries and on the Colonne Vendôme, also on the Council House, by two o'clock, and a number of the old Imperial Court were in possession of the palace. Ministers and chamberlains came in gala uniform, servants in their livery, ladies of the court and ambassadors' wives in full dress, and wearing violets.

The carpet in the throne-room was ornamented with Bourbon lilies, of which a lady tore one off —it was sewn on—when bees, the Emperor's emblem, appeared underneath. In a trice the lilies were scattered, and the carpet became Imperial once more.

The city was shrouded in darkness, and hours passed by, while those in waiting controlled their impatience, for it was nine o'clock before the sound of horses and vehicles, with the shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" were heard.

A carriage came rapidly through the iron gate, the door was as quickly opened, Napoleon was lifted out and carried up the steps, where old friends were the first to clasp his hands.

Then, after many other greetings, he went to his study and locked the door. On the hearth, where he sat himself down, was still a tiny glow of the fire by which Louis XVIII. had warmed himself.

The Emperor began his work by framing a

fresh government, but he soon discovered that public opinion in Paris was quite another thing to the enthusiasm which had greeted him on his journey through France.

During his triumphal procession from Grenoble, the people had knelt on his path, and scrambled to the front just to touch his clothes. There were many discontented citizens in the capital, who pitied Louis and feared a fresh war. Several adherents had certainly rallied round him, but he missed many of the faces he had hoped to see ; and his disappointment was all the keener, because the excessive jubilation in the provinces had aroused his expectations of the unanimous response of the Parisians.

" Have you the permission of the great powers, or only that of Austria, for your return ? " asked the minister, Carnot ; and when Napoleon replied that not one of the great powers knew of his undertaking he added :

" There is more than as much again to do, than what your Majesty has already accomplished."

The Emperor strove with all his might, but in vain, to unite his diplomatic interests. He had hardly set foot on French soil, before he began to overwhelm Marie Louise with entreaties to come to him with the King of Rome.

The first letter reached Schönbrunn in a nutshell, after which, and at shorter intervals, came still more urgent missives.

The Parisians, too, were impatient for the arrival of the Empress and her son. Napoleon had his wife's apartments put in order ; for the *people* were to believe that Austria would help France. He even entreated his father-in-law to give back his wife and child ; but Francis ignored his son-in-law's existence.

The guard in Schönbrunn was increased, and the pick of the police staff stationed round the castle to watch over Napoleon's son, while the Minister of Police was instructed to stop all letters from the French Emperor.

It is, and ever will be, a mystery how, in spite of everything, some of them reached the hands of faithful Méneval.

## CHAPTER IV

The Comtesse de Montesquiou leaves the Little King

THERE was a strong belief at the court of Vienna that some enterprising Frenchmen would try to get possession of the King of Rome, and earn the large reward that report said Napoleon had offered if his son was brought to him.

All the rooms in the Hofburg were in use, on account of the number of foreign princes in Vienna. But when they left for the seat of war it was settled that Napoleon's son should reside there, it being easier to have an eye upon him in the capital than in Schönbrunn; besides, every policemen was furnished with an exact description of his appearance, in case of an attempt to carry him away.[1]

Count Anatole, son of the Comtesse de Montesquiou, had been living in Vienna for some months,

[1] The police were under strict orders not to let any little boy leave Austria if the following description fitted :—

"He is two and a half feet high, square in build. He has a pretty, smooth face, and round cheeks; colouring red and white; eyes blue, and deep set. He has a little pug nose, rather large nostrils, a small mouth, red lips, large white teeth, light yellow hair, falling in thick locks over his shoulders. The Prince generally speaks French, but knows a little German. He is very lively, talks quickly, constantly gesticulates."

and had made himself a great favourite in the inner circles of society as a refined, eminently amiable man; but the Minister of Police suspected him of planning to carry off the King of Rome to Paris. He maintained that it would be so easy for his mother to take her charge to him during a walk; a travelling carriage could stand ready, and quickly whirl them away.

It was therefore determined, 14th March, that it was expedient to remove the Countess from her post.

On 20th March—the same day on which his father entered Paris—the poor child was torn from his beloved governess, who had shown him, as we have seen, the most complete self-sacrificing devotion from his birth. It was announced to her quite suddenly that she was dismissed, and must leave immediately.

The Countess was helpless. She demanded a written order from the Emperor, which was sent to her; then she required that the child's doctor should give her an assurance that the former King of Rome was in perfect health when she left him.

Her son was commanded to leave the country instantly, and she herself to follow him a few days later; but, at the last minute, they both had orders to remain. The Countess took leave of her charge, to be shut up in two tiny rooms, where she was kept imprisoned for three months.

Without his mother's knowledge, Count

Anatole tried to escape, but he was recognised at a frontier station, and brought back a prisoner. The Countess, who was already cast down at having to forsake her foster-child, was almost in despair as to her son's flight and imprisonment. In her distress she appealed to Talleyrand, who had always held her in the highest esteem. He managed to gain greater freedom for her son, but the mother had to give her word of honour that he would never leave Vienna.

It was the middle of June when the long looked-for permission reached them to return to France. Marie Louise gave her son's governess a last audience ; but the noble-hearted woman, who had been as a mother to "the little King," was not allowed to say good-bye to him.

It was a keen disappointment to her not to see him again, and many a bitter tear was shed, even in after years, as she thought of him.

The few Frenchmen who still remained with the ex-Empress were kept under strict supervision. They were forbidden any connection with their country, and no French subject was allowed to visit them.

. . . . . .

The sorrow that the little boy felt on parting with "Mama Quiou" was lessened by the permission granted to her assistant, Madame Soufflot, to remain, as well as her daughter, Fanny, about fifteen, of whom he was fond.

Madame Soufflot taught him, and as a com-

panion he had a little French boy, Gobereau, whose father was footman, and his mother sewing-maid, to Marie Louise.

In addition there was his nurse, Madame Marchand, a simple peasant, who could neither read nor write ; but she had a heart of gold, and she was French—ready, without hesitation, to follow Napoleon's son to the world's end.

In the meantime the Emperor had settled that the Countess Mittrowski Scaranpi should take the place of the Countess Montesquiou, for a time. This imperious woman later became First Lady of Honour to Marie Louise ; and, with Neipperg's consent, she led her just as she chose.

But the son was not so easy to guide as his mother, and the poor forsaken child had to endure harsh treatment before she could bend him under her yoke. The ex-Empress was the only one who did not see what a thorny path he had to tread while the Countess Scaranpi was his governess. If it was commented upon that it was sad that the Comtesse de Montesquiou was no longer with him, she simply rejoined that she herself had changed governesses four times, and that it had not killed her !

She admired and thanked her father for giving this harsh Austrian authority to manage her son as she thought best ; and quietly left him in her hands.

Méneval had long since learned that all his efforts to further Napoleon's cause were useless ;

he longed to leave Schönbrunn, and at last he was able to return to France, with permission to say good-bye to the former King of Rome. He was distressed to see the child's sad look, altered appearance and manner. The brightness which made him so irresistible was gone. He had used to run, brimful of life, to welcome Méneval ; now he stood dumb, without a sign that he even knew him.

When asked what message he would send to his father, the child looked at him sorrowfully, but did not reply ; then, quietly taking his hand out of his, he went to the farthest corner of the room. After exchanging a few words with the ladies, Méneval went up to the boy, who was in his corner, with anxious, observant eyes, and stooped to say good-bye, when he was drawn close to the window, and the little one whispered :

" Monsieur Méneval, tell him, that I always think so much of him ! "

This scene took place scarcely six weeks after his separation from the Comtesse de Montesquiou. He was only four years old ; and yet he had already learned that he was surrounded by his own and his father's adversaries, and that it was essential to be silent, and to play a part.

## CHAPTER V

Napoleon I. and the Hundred Days — Napoleon II. Emperor for Ten Days

MARIE LOUISE was in painful anxiety lest Napoleon should be conqueror in this contest; for in that case she was convinced that he would force her to return to Paris, with their son.

Neipperg had left, 1st April, to join the army against her brother-in-law, Murat, and in a letter to her former governess, the Comtesse de Colloredo, the ex-Empress wrote that "she was in despair, that she had not heard from him for a whole week!"

In the midst of the war occurred the death of the Comtesse de Neipperg, and Marie Louise was so completely wrapped up in her passionate attachment, that she was unable to disguise her joy that her lover was now free. She forgot all decency towards her husband, and when her stepmother asked her to take part in a church procession to pray for the downfall of Napoleon she consented. That she declined at the very last minute was owing to her father and brother, who showed her the incongruity of her act.

To all Germans in her vicinity she never ceased to speak disparagingly of the French.

"For no prize in the world will I ever again

set foot in that horrid land of France," she said ; and : " The French folk are shameless, ungodly and untrue ! "

She also declared that she would rather spend her days in a nunnery than share the throne with Napoleon.

In spite of so many proofs of her ill-will towards him, the Austrians could not bring themselves to think otherwise than that she clung to him in her heart. Even her sisters had difficulty in believing her when she denounced her husband and the land, where she had so recently shared his throne as Empress.

On his way to the seat of war, Napoleon tried yet again to persuade Francis to withdraw from the other opponents, and even sent one of Talleyrand's friends to Vienna to sound Metternich and the Emperor. But both remained convinced that none of the powers had the least intention of laying down their arms until they had made the Corsican harmless for ever.

Lucien Bonaparte hastened to Paris to join his brother, and found him weary and discouraged, not one bit as he used to be. His self-confidence was crushed, and he no longer had the whole nation at his back.

Still, at the grand military parade he held, before leaving, 100,000 men defiled before him, but stores and equipages were insufficient, and when he asked the National Guard if they were ready to defend the " Eagles " with their

blood there was no enthusiastic "Yes!" It was only his own old Guard that showed any zeal, and, "as they marched past," relates the Duc de Broglie, "their eyes shone with a weird glow, and on their lips one seemed to read 'Morituri, te salutant!'" "Even if he wins three battles he must still be the loser," said Lucien Bonaparte, and within six days, it was evident that he was right.

The defeat at Waterloo had exhausted the Emperor's strength; and when he reached Charleroi, he gave over the future command to his brother, Jérome, while he himself left for Paris in a post-chaise.

He was beset by those who entreated him to abdicate in favour of his son, a plan strongly advocated by Lucien Bonaparte. If we trust his own memoirs, he did not at first intend to name the King of Rome as his successor.

"An Austrian regency!" he exclaimed. "No; Bourbons rather than that."

But later on Lucien was able to persuade him to insert this clause in the document: "I declare my son Emperor of the French under the title of Napoleon II." Then, after his signature, he added: "If my son is not declared Emperor, my abdication is invalid."

The Chamber of the Peers met on 22nd June, when General Labedoyère came forward as spokesman for Napoleon II. He was full of youthful fire and zeal, and joined himself heart

and soul to Lucien Bonaparte, who had shouted : " The Emperor has abdicated ! Long live the Emperor ! "

It was a blow to the young general when one of the members of the meeting declared that he would never recognise a child as his king—still less one not even living in France !

When a third speaker came forward, to advise that a decision should be postponed, and a provisional arrangement be adopted, his wrath knew no bounds.

" If the son is not recognised and crowned," he shrieked, " his father's abdication is invalid ! In that case, Napoleon will yet find Frenchmen enough ready to shed their blood for him ! "

Then he suddenly fixed his fiery eyes on a corner of the assembly, and continued with a voice quivering with wrath : " The Emperor is likely to be betrayed once again ! Perhaps generals are even now at hand, ready to be bought, and to desert *him!* Let us bring in a law to brand such traitors ! If their names are cursed, if their houses are levelled to the ground, if their families are exiled, then we shall be free from traitors ! Base plots such as brought about the last catastrophe, and whose promoters, even originators, are possibly among us here, will never be formed again ! "

A fearful tumult followed this powerful speech.[1]

[1] Labedoyère paid for these daring words with his life on the return of the Bourbons.

" You seem to think that these are to be found among soldiers. Young man, you forget yourself ! " shouted General Massena.

As the excitement gradually subsided, the dispute as to Napoleon's son began afresh.

" It is only in the name of Napoleon II.," said General Ségur, " that the Provisional Government can negotiate with foreign powers."

He was relying strongly on Lucien and Joseph Bonaparte, on the Duke of Bassano and the Counts Roederer and Flahault.

But several opponents were of opinion that it was wiser, at this critical point, not to busy themselves with individuals, but to consider, above all, the Fatherland, its defence and safety.

This appeal to love of the Fatherland worked wonderfully, and when the meeting was dissolved, at one o'clock in the morning, it was evident that the Empire of Napoleon II. was at an end.

The following day, a meeting was held by the Lower House, in which the succession to the throne was again introduced, and the debate opened by young Béranger, who was highly thought of.

He maintained that the abdication of Napoleon was one of the most striking proofs of attachment to their country.

Count Defermon, who had been a wise counsellor under the Empire, tried to force the meeting to vote in favour of Napoleon's son, as he exclaimed :

"Just because Napoleon has renounced the throne for him, is no reason for saying that the Empire does not exist. I ask each one of you: Have we a French Emperor? Yes, or no! Here, in our midst, there is not one who will answer otherwise than that we have an Emperor in Napoleon II.!"

His very clear little speech was welcomed with loud applause, and "Yes, yes!" on all sides, while hats were waved, amid shouts of "Long live the Emperor!"

In the meanwhile, Napoleon's former minister, Fouché, had been quietly working to undermine his son's throne, and not without success.

He knew that the allied sovereigns were unanimous that Louis XVIII. should again become King of France. It is probable that he had arranged a plan of campaign with his confidential friend, Manuel, who now rose to occupy the Speaker's chair. After a start, in which he acted as an adherent of the Emperor, and led his audience to believe that foreign powers would recognise Napoleon II., he continued:

"Should this, however, not be the case, it is not right to place the interests of our person higher than those of the country; and, however much, gentlemen, you may be devoted to Napoleon II., in such a case you must make the sacrifice, and vote unanimously for the well-being of the State!"

In the proclamation which the Provisional

Government issued to the people, the Emperor's son had but a passing notice. The secretary, who drew it up, tried to emphasise the name of Napoleon II., but Fouché drew his pen through this portion of the paper, and wrote briefly :

" The son is not mentioned ! "

At the last meeting of the Government the question was asked in whose name the orders were issued.

" In the name of Napoleon II., of course," said Carnot. But he was interrupted by Fouché, the president :

" No, certainly not ! They are issued in the name of the French nation ! "

The Bourbons returned ; Fouché and his friends had no need to give a thought to Napoleon's son, who had been Emperor just ten days.

## CHAPTER VI

Count Moritz Dietrichstein and Madame Soufflot—Napoleon's Son refuses to become a German

THE same day that Napoleon left Paris, for the last time, news was brought to his wife, at Baden, near Vienna, that he had been defeated at Waterloo, and in their joy that the allied powers were victorious, the Austrians sang their triumphal hymns under her very window.

Maria Ludovica told her stepdaughter of her husband's final defeat, in an interview that lasted some four hours; and when the ladies at length appeared, it was still difficult for the ex-Empress to control her emotion. When she received the news that the Emperor had been taken to St Helena, she wrote to her father:

"I hope that we shall at last have peace, never to be ruffled again by the Emperor Napoleon: I hope, too, that he will be treated with kindness and gentleness; and that you, dearest papa, will do your best to ensure this treatment. It is the only prayer I dare offer for him, and it is the last time I interest myself in his affairs! I am thankful that, instead of making me unhappy, he lets me live my life in repose."

Everyone was already busy at the court of Vienna with the task of converting the King of

Rome into an Austrian prince. Count Moritz Dietrichstein was appointed his tutor, although his mother disliked the choice, and on 7th July 1815 she wrote to her father :

" I went yesterday to see my son, who sends you his most respectful greetings. He is well, and I made the acquaintance of Count Moritz Dietrichstein, of whom I formed a good opinion, and especially as you have only given the post provisionally until my son can accompany me to Italy, or I make some other arrangement for his education. This of course cannot be for another year ! As a tutor, he does not suit me, although he is certainly a distinguished man."

The Count was the younger son of the Prince Johan Karl Dietrichstein, who had held a special position at the court of the Emperor Joseph—while his mother had been the confidential friend of Maria Theresa.

He was a chamberlain, had been superintendent of the court theatre, and had remarkable literary and artistic talent. Beethoven had been a frequent guest at his house, which was the meeting-place for celebrities in art and science.

The new tutor, who was about forty, had been a distinguished officer, but had retired from the army. On his first interview with his pupil the child obstinately refused to see him.

" I will not go into the room while he is there," he said ; and when he was forced to

enter he stared at him, from top to toe, with contempt. The Count fancied that this discourteous reception was the result of Madame Soufflot's influence.

"I am not blind to the difficulties my position will bring me, as long as the prince has women about him," he wrote to a confidential friend.

He noticed with regret that both mother and daughter were continually reminding the child of the splendours with which he had formerly been surrounded, while they filled his mind with fancies utterly unsuited to his present position. He naturally listened with eagerness to all stories about his father's court, and remembered that he had been in the midst of it all, when he was king, and had pages. All who heard him were amazed at his exact description of his life in those very early years.

Dietrichstein recognised that if the child was to be cured of feeling himself an unhappy stranger in this land, where he was forced to live, the influence of these Frenchwomen must be crushed as quickly as possible.

He therefore firmly demanded the dismissal of Madame Soufflot, who was told by Marie Louise, 9th October 1815, that circumstances forced her to send her away.

Both mother and daughter were warmly attached to the little boy, who was fond of them both; but his German teacher saw no sign of his grief on their departure. He gave Fanny

his souvenirs from France: his little gun, and the sword set with pearls, with which he had played in the bishop's garden at Orleans, as well as some French medals.[1]

It was also a relief for the new tutor when the footman Gobereau left, in order to accompany Marie Louise, and took his son with him.

Then it was at his suggestion that Captain Foresti was appointed sub-tutor to the little Napoleon.

The court physician insisted that his French nursemaid should remain, as the child was too young to be solely in the hands of men, and Marie Louise gave Madame Marchand a character that she was a good, unassuming woman, who never interfered.

But she was the last link between the great Napoleon on St Helena and little Napoleon in Schönbrunn; and she loved the unhappy soldier who had trusted his son to her care in the Tuileries.

She talked to the little boy about his father, and when she was told to cease talking she always had his grateful smile.

Madame Marchand's fidelity conquered distance and jailers; for, although they had sent the Emperor all those miles away, the simple-

[1] On reaching Paris, Madame Soufflot sent some toys to her little charge, who wrote to her, 7th January 1816:

"My dear Toto,—I am still very fond of you! We often speak of you, and I embrace you and Fanny right heartily!"

hearted peasant woman found means to put herself into communication with him. She knew that one of the Schönbrunn gardeners was to go to St Helena, so she cut off a lock of the little King's hair, and begged him to take it to Napoleon.

The story of the lock of hair became known, and gave rise to inquiries, for Napoleon's enemies would not allow such greetings from the outer world.

The watch on the island was increased, and when the gardener returned to Vienna he was submitted to a severe examination.

The servant had notice to leave, and on 27th February 1816 she put her charge to bed as usual, sitting by him until he was fast asleep; then she kissed him, with tears in her eyes, and left him.

When he awoke next morning and did not see his nurse, he understood that she too had been taken from him. Without a tear, or a complaint, he said to the tutor, who had taken her place in the bedroom :

" Captain Foresti, I should like to get up."

. . . . . .

The Emperor Francis had given Dietrichstein and Foresti the difficult task of transforming the little Frenchman into an Austrian. The land of his birth was to be closed to him, and his devotion to Napoleon was to be changed into respect for his grandfather. Under these

circumstances, the very first thing was to force him to forget the French language, which was by no means easy.

"I will not become a German," he screamed again and again. "I will be a Frenchman!"

His teachers were unable to conquer his resistance, and it was only when they begged Marie Louise to help them that the child yielded to her entreaties.

He was to learn so many German words by heart every day, and repeat them with the sentences he had learnt the previous day; and by this means he was able, in the course of three months, to understand what was said.

In the autumn of 1816 Dietrichstein wrote to the Archduke Rainer: "He can read French quite easily, when his laziness and absent-mindedness do not hinder him. It is a great satisfaction that for the last three weeks he has mainly spoken German, and it is astonishing that he can make himself understood as well as he does in our language."

But his relations in Vienna were not satisfied that he should just forget his native tongue; they aimed at destroying every recollection of the past, and that the high opinion of himself that had been fostered by the Frenchwomen should be quite uprooted.

Every book ornamented with the Imperial Eagle was taken from him, and the very last of

the toys he had brought with him from France.

And when he spoke to Dietrichstein about the brilliant life of former days, the tutor coldly remarked that such a very little child as he was, could not possibly remember a single thing.

## CHAPTER VII

Political Affairs after Napoleon's Departure to St Helena—The King of Rome created Duke of Reichstadt

On 9th July 1815 Louis XVIII. made his second entry into Paris, under the protection of foreign bayonets. There had been a few cheers for the family the previous day, with the almost unanimous rejoinder: "Down with the Bourbons!" while a man who had fastened a white cockade on to his hat was attacked and beaten in the street. Still, the king was greeted with a few cheers, as he drove into the city, though sharp observers were not taken in by this unexpected reception, but believed that this stay of the Bourbons in France would be of no longer duration than the previous one.

Varnhagen von Ense wrote thus to his wife, 22nd July:

"The Duke of Orleans, or a regency for that world-renowned child, is the only thing that Frenchmen are likely to put up with!"

Close to the Tuileries the shout of "Long live the Emperor!" was heard. Then again a man shouted: "Long live his Majesty the King!" But when some of Louis' friends responded with cheers he continued with a loud voice: "Long live his Majesty the King of Rome!"

One caricature represented fat Louis trying to climb a ship's mast, supported by nobles and clergy, while the Archduke Charles of Austria stood looking on, holding the King of Rome by the hand, and the child saying to his uncle :

" Oh, I should like to climb up there ! " To which the Archduke rejoined : " Not yet ! "

The print-shops had provided an amazing display of portraits of Napoleon and his family, as well as coins with a likeness of Napoleon II., worth twenty-one sous, and bought up for twenty-one francs.

Unless the Emperor Francis would give his powerful help, the return of Napoleon's son to France was impossible, but it was hoped that the Archduke Charles would further his rights. Lucien Bonaparte was merely waiting for a sign from Austria to lead his brother's son to Paris, and, at the same time, Marie Louise was of opinion that there was nothing to hinder her from taking her son to her own duchy. She no longer hoped for an Imperial throne for him ; but she eagerly looked forward to seeing him reigning Duke of Parma.

Before the return of Napoleon from Elba, Russia, Prussia and Austria had secretly pledged themselves to support the cause, and they had also agreed to watch their opportunity to try to induce England, France and Spain to give their consent. But, when she referred to this

agreement, Metternich observed that Austria had joined the others only for form's sake, and not one of the powers had the least intention of raising a finger to fulfil the promise. The Emperor Francis ordered his daughter to relinquish her title of Empress, and to do away with a large painting by Gérard, representing her wearing the Imperial crown. Finally, she submitted, when her father expressed the wish, that she should dismiss all French servants that remained in her service.

Although she had never shown much affection for her son, she was rather sad at heart as the departure for Parma drew near, and she had once again to leave him behind in Vienna, though she still hoped that separation was only temporary, and that the succession would be secured to him.

Louis XVIII. did not dare to demand that all the rights accorded to the Emperor of Austria's grandson should be nullified; but he encouraged the Spanish Bourbons to require that, on the death of Marie Louise, Parma should fall to the ex-Queen of Etruria, a Spanish infanta; and the English minister, who knew that Austria had no wish to make Napoleon's son an Italian duke, strengthened the claims of Spain. On the other hand, Metternich did not dare to act openly. First of all, he could not know that the Czar of Russia would continue to play his part of protector to Marie Louise; and, secondly,

it was very important to Francis I. that the successor in Parma should not be changed without the consent of his daughter.

On 5th October 1815 orders were sent to Neipperg, summoning him to Vienna, in order to join in a conference as to the affairs of Marie Louise.

"It looks as if fresh difficulties were arising, with reference to full possession of my state," the ex-Empress wrote to her father, 7th October.

"How can it be possible that folk are not yet satisfied, after all the great sacrifices they forced me to make, and which I accepted for the common weal!"

On the 28th she wrote again:

"It is a comfort to me that, even if all the other powers have laid their plans to disturb my peace and quietness, you, with your fatherly care, will always help me. It does not concern me personally, so much, but it affects the future of my son."

She awaited Neipperg's return with impatience, and when he did arrive, at last, his news was most depressing. Her father would realise none of her expectations, but shortly and firmly gave her to understand that under no circumstances would her son be her successor. Napoleons were just a thorn in the flesh to all rulers.[1]

[1] In the Court Calendar of 1817 he is neither called "King of Rome" nor "Prince of Parma," but simply "the child of Marie Louise."

Neipperg dissuaded her from resisting the decision of the great powers ; but, at the same time, he advised her to try to get some minor advantages for her child.

On 10th June 1817 the agreement was at last signed in Paris, and Marie Louise, who knew nothing of it, trusted that the document contained some conclusions that would assure the future of her son. But, in the meantime, by unanimous consent, little Napoleon's name had been ignored, and when the mother eventually received the official text it was a bitter blow to find how completely he had been passed over, and it was then, for the first time, she showed powers of resistance, of which previously she was not thought capable. She firmly refused to sign the agreement until the members had pledged themselves to see that the former King of Rome was created an independent prince.

The Emperor Francis had already taken steps to ensure the promise.

On 4th November 1817 he announced to the other powers that he intended to bequeath to his grandchild his estates in the Bavarian district of the Upper Palatinate ; and that he also intended to provide him with a title that would ensure forgetfulness of his former one in the future.

The son of Marie Louise was not to be counted a prince of the Imperial house, his rank was to be next to that of the archdukes. He was not to

be called Imperial Highness, but " Durchlaucht " =Serene Highness ; and if he died without direct and legitimate issue his property would revert to the Imperial house.

In France, and in many other courts, the hope had been expressed that Napoleon's child would be quietly put into a monastery to end his days as a priest ; there was therefore some uncomfortable agitation caused by the expression " direct and legitimate issue." The Berlin Government declared that it was their duty to demand that he never married. But, in spite of the Emperor's willingness to oblige, he found it too harsh to condemn his daughter's son to celibacy and the seclusion of a cloister.

He wished him to have the title of " Duke of Mödling," a famous name, " which had been exclusively borne by princes of the house of Babenberg," and he wrote to Marie Louise, who replied she would like him to be called " Duke of Babenberg," alleging that Metternich had promised to bring it about ; but the chancellor emphatically denied it.

She wrote to Neipperg : " To create the prince ' Duke of Babenberg ' would be equivalent to resuscitating the whole house of Austria in his person ! This fact alone makes the thing impossible."

As there was no chance of overcoming Metternich's scruples, she begged that the new name might be chosen from one of the chief estates

of the Upper Palatinate possessions ; and, after much consideration, the name of Reichstadt was adopted.

It was not till the ex-Empress had been assured that the material future of her son was safe, that she gave full authority to Neipperg to sign the Paris contract in her name.

And thus it was that the heir to the throne of France had become a German duke, by virtue of the Austrian *will*. The name of Napoleon had already been taken from him, as well as his surname, Bonaparte, and, too, without any further scruple, the title of " King of Rome." With his mother's consent he had ceased to be " Prince of Parma." It had been a grief to her that he could no longer be called either Imperial or Royal Highness, he was only " Serene Highness."

And there was not a word of reference to the Emperor Napoleon, who was still living, in the diploma which made his son the Duke of Reichstadt.

The proud old lady, Madame Letitia Bonaparte, laughed scornfully when she heard that the King of Rome's grandfather had drawn up a document, which published that " the Archduchess Marie Louise had a son, to whom had been given rank, arms and a surname."

" We have had our revenge on the house of Austria," she said, " for when they gave Marie Louise to my son, it was not in the character of

a wife, simply that of a mistress ! My grandson will never have a finer name than his father's ! 'Duke of Reichstadt' rings false. But the name of Napoleon Bonaparte will reverberate to the end of the world."

## CHAPTER VIII

His Longing to hear about his Father—Pupil and Teachers

It was perfectly still in the wing of the castle where the former King of Rome had his apartments. The long corridors were empty, and the only sound, from time to time, was that of the bell connecting the servant's room with that of his tutor.

The Duke of Reichstadt was at this time just six years old. His mother had left him, and he, with his tutor, occupied the so-called "Gobelins suite," the walls of which were covered with tapestry representing mythological scenes, enclosed in magnificent frames. Louis XV. had presented them to Maria Theresa on the occasion of his grandson's marriage with Marie Antoinette —and, lest the name of the donor should be forgotten, they were adorned with the Bourbon lilies and the King's initials. The higher windows were draped with yellow silk curtains; between them hung old Venetian mirrors, and on the carved console stood a pendulum clock, ornamented with the Double Eagle of Austria.

In the military school at Brienne,[1] Napoleon I.,

[1] See "Napoleon's Mother," p. 50, by Clara Tschudi, translated by E. M. Cope.

when nine years old, as a punishment for some trifling offence, was made to kneel down, and eat his dinner in that position. The boy refused, but was at length forced to kneel, when he uttered a despairing cry :

" Mother ! Mother ! You taught me that we are not to kneel to men, only to God ! "

But Napoleon II. was on his knees every hour of the day, and if he tried to raise his head he was beaten down with scorn and jeering. Like a caged bird, he tried to flap his wings, but he only beat them against gilt bars, while the young archdukes looked on with malicious pleasure.

Then he took to sitting absolutely still in his corner, just gazing, with a sickly glance, on what was around him.

No one showed him kindness, there was not one in whom he had confidence—that he cared for. He felt himself a burden to each one. They watched him and spied on him ; he knew that his clothes, his table and his drawers were searched each evening to make quite sure that nothing from outside had reached him. Whether he was glad or gloomy, there were always those about him who set down every expression, every remark, to some recollection of his earlier years, and repeated it all to his grandfather.

Crowds went out to Schönbrunn to see him, and to stare at him, as at some strange creature. Sometimes lads, whom he met, when walking with his tutor, shouted loud enough for him to hear :

" See, here comes Napoleon's son ! "

This did not escape the notice of the child, and it naturally preyed upon him, for he was far too intelligent not to understand that there were secrets being kept from him.

The departure of his governess and his systematic seclusion showed him clearly that those in authority feared to bring him into contact with the outer world.

Thousands of questions tormented him: Where was his father ? And why were they not all living as they used to do ? Now and again his thoughts of the past became so acute that he could not restrain his curiosity. He did not ask direct questions, but he tried hard in other ways to learn something.

While Madame Soufflot was still with him, he used to listen when she and Count Dietrichstein were talking ; he thirsted to hear if only a few words of their conversation, and just to catch the mere name of Napoleon. This child, who had apparently accepted his separation from his French surroundings with apathy, and who was thought to be cold and heartless, because he did not cry when his mother left him, was unceasingly thinking of his father ; and he was more acute than many a grown man, in wresting meagre information from those about him. He utilised what he heard and saw, waiting a convenient moment to jump from one question to another, and sometimes bring the speaker into

a tight corner. Now and again he would throw in a word that he had heard, *en passant*, and which had caused many bitter tears when alone.

His tutors complained to the Emperor about his curiosity with reference to all that touched on the past.

"It is time we began the prince's education," answered his grandfather. "You must reply candidly to each one of his questions—that will be the best way of calming these fancies! And it is also the only means by which you can win his confidence, which is essential, as you have to guide him!"

One day the boy asked the Emperor:

"Is it true that I had pages when I was in Paris?"

"Yes, I believe you had pages."

"Is it true that I was called King of Rome?"

"Yes."

"What does it mean to be King of Rome?"

"My child, when you are older, it will be easier for me to explain the things that you ask me about now. For the moment, I can only tell you that, besides my title, Emperor of Austria, I possess that of 'King of Jerusalem,' although I have not a fraction of power in that city. You became King of Rome in the same way that I became King of Jerusalem."

In the meantime, Marie Louise was satisfying herself with the thought that Dietrichstein was

to remain as tutor to her son. "Now that I know the count better, I really think well of him," she wrote to her father, 5th January 1816: "He deserves all praise for his perseverance with reference to my son."

Already, in the autumn of 1815, Dietrichstein had declared that the education of the prince entailed such extreme responsibility that it was necessary for Foresti to have an assistant. He had represented to the mother that he needed the most strenuous supervision, partly in order to conquer his violent temper, and partly to uproot the ideas which he had learnt in France. He recommended Professor Mathias von Collin, a well-informed, unassuming, amiable man, who had formerly taught the sisters of Marie Louise.

"I hope," wrote the mother, while thanking the Emperor for making the appointment, "that, under the guidance of three such talented men as Dietrichstein, Foresti and Collin, my son will become an upright, cultured man!"

One day the little Duke said to Foresti:

"Napoleon must have been a great general, as he was able to become a king!"

"He was not king, but Emperor," answered Foresti.

"Is that the same Napoleon that married my mother a year before I was born?" he continued. "Why is he no longer Emperor?"

Foresti ignored the first question; then answered that all the powers had fought against

Napoleon, because he was trying to conquer the whole world.

The child paused, and then tried to probe the subject more deeply.

" I have heard that he is in America," he said.

To Foresti's intense relief, this conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant.

Another day he went to Collin with his questions.

" Why did they call me King of Rome when I was little ? "

" That was in the days when your father ruled over big kingdoms," answered Collin.

" Did Rome belong to my father ? "

" Rome belonged to the Pope as a State of the Church."

" Where is he now ? "

" The Pope is in Rome."

" My father is in the East Indies, is he not ? "

" No ; not a bit of it ! "

" Then he is in America ? "

" Why should he be in America ? "

" Where is he then ? "

" I cannot tell you."

" The ladies, Madame Soufflot and her daughter, said that he had been in England, but had fled from there."

" That is a mistake ! You know how often you misunderstand what is said to you."

" Yes, that is true ! "

"I can assure you that your father has never been in England."

"I think I have been told that he is in misery."

The child had evidently heard somebody talk about St Helena.

"In misery?" asked the teacher.

"Yes!"

"How could it be possible or probable!" said Collin, who utilised the double meaning of the French word *misère*—distress and poverty—in order to reassure him.

"No, that is true," exclaimed the boy, as his face beamed with delight. "I thought so myself. It could not be possible!"

This conversation took place in the January of 1818, and the child had not seen a single Frenchman since February 1816.

For two years he had borne the word *misère* in his heart; he had clung to it, turning it over and over, without understanding it.

During one of his walks he asked Foresti who was reigning in France.

"A king," answered Foresti.

"But I know that an Emperor used to rule there! Who was that?"

"That was your father, who lost both crown and land, in consequence of his unfortunate mania for war," was the answer.

After the son had remarked in rejoinder that he knew all the Emperor's campaigns from a book,

which he no longer had, he went on with his questions :

" Is my beloved father a criminal, as he has brought about so many misfortunes ? "

" We have no right to judge him ! You must go on loving your father, and pray for him," answered Foresti.

The unfortunate child was hungry again and again with a longing to know more of the first years of his life. But if the explanations offered him were not satisfactory he just became more and more reserved, and months elapsed between each effort to revert to the subject which lay so heavily on his heart.

He had not been accustomed to regular school routine, and it was excessively difficult to him to be attentive during lesson hours. Madame Soufflot had been enthusiastic about him, and had not grasped that she was blunting his abilities by constantly lightening his work. Although she had tried to give him a taste for knowledge, he could not read clearly when Dietrichstein undertook his education.

" You shall hear how cleverly the prince can read," said Madame Soufflot. But Dietrichstein soon saw that the pupil was frequently just guessing, which did not prevent his governess overloading him with praise, convinced as she herself was that he was making good progress.

Both teachers quickly saw how necessary it was to change the plan—not that they wished

to overtask him, though certainly to make him sharp and attentive.

Each morning the boy used to exclaim aloud: "I will learn! I must be more sensible!" But it only lasted a few minutes, and he became thoughtless and absent as before, or else he cried, and was lazy, or passionate—one day even raising his hand to strike his teacher. Foresti looked at him severely, and asked him if he thought he had to do with women, after which he put him in the corner, which humbled the proud child.

Out of lesson hours, he was quick of comprehension and inquiry, devoted to reading, if it had nothing to do with the daily school routine. He thought about all manner of things, and later on his teachers said that he had really never had a childhood.

When he was five years old his mind was as formed as that of a gifted child of ten, and Queen Amelie of Saxony, who was visiting at the court of Vienna when he was eight years old, wrote in her diary that he talked as sensibly as a youth of twelve.

Collin and Foresti were both amazed at his quick understanding and remarkable memory. It was impossible to satisfy him with adventures or children's stories; according to Dietrichstein's account, he "needed more intellectual amusement."

Collin read passages from the Bible to him,

while his favourite recreation book was " Robinson Crusoe," and he could repeat long pieces from books, which he had only once or twice heard read aloud ; also, when he spoke French, he used, with the greatest facility, the choice expressions which he had heard from his governess.

Those who only knew him slightly were as infatuated with his amiability, as surprised by his keenness, and the charm of his conversation. But his masters were displeased, because he only exerted himself when the work was voluntary, but neglected the tasks which they required of him. He liked to appear independent ; and, chafing under the perpetual restraint laid upon him, he often did things which they had strictly forbidden.

Apparently without any reason, he expressed opinions highly annoying to his tutors, mainly on war topics.

Although he was wanting in perseverance generally, he loved games and activity, even bearing pain without wincing ; he did not like to be thought weak. When he was to learn to swim, he jumped straight away into the water ; but, later on, he told somebody he felt as though it would cost him his life, though he would rather have died on the spot than show fear, with so many looking on.

He was absolutely ashamed to be so young, and he despised praise such as boys generally

appreciate. He was violent in his games and destructive with his toys; but full of compassion for all suffering beings; moved to tears if he saw an animal ill treated; and very tender-hearted towards the poor, with whom he frequently shared his scanty pocket-money—parting with things he was really fond of, if he could give pleasure to another.

Although he was often severely punished by his masters, he never seems to have borne them a grudge. When he tormented, it was quite evident it was from no personal ill feeling, but because it annoyed him that, according to orders, he had to put up with them, always!

As he was rarely thrown with those of his own age, he had accustomed himself to listen attentively to the conversation of his elders, in which he sometimes joined.

He could not bear to be overlooked.

One day he and his tutor met the Persian ambassador at an exhibition, who talked in a loud voice to Dietrichstein, but took not the least notice of the Duke.

"That is an uncommonly lively Persian!" exclaimed the boy, with comic gravity.

One day the Archduke Anthony, wanting to tease and puzzle him, said to the six-year-old child, at the Emperor's table one day: "You shall have a ride on the lion in the menagerie at Schönbrunn."

" All right," was the quick reply. " You get up first, and I'll follow ! "

Another day, he heard some gentlemen discussing who were the greatest commanders of the day, when he rushed up to the group, and shouted :

" I can tell you one : my father !—he is the greatest ! "

Then he ran off, but one of the gentlemen called him back and said : " You were quite right to remind us of your father, but you were wrong to run away as soon as you had said so ! "

After long worrying, he at last began to grasp that he was not just passing through Vienna, as he had at first thought, but that he had to stay there.

Dietrichstein intended that his instruction should be entirely in German, but on this point the boy remained absolutely obstinate ; and, in spite of all efforts to make him take to the fresh language, his teachers could not flatter themselves that they were any nearer their object.

Many years later, he confided to his best friend that he had never forgotten France, as time passed on ; and that his dreams always led him to the distant island where his father was pining in solitude.

## CHAPTER IX

Change from Preparatory Education—Indifference of his Mother—Events at Court—The Exiled Emperor's vain Efforts to get in touch with his Son

NAPOLEON'S son was now eight years old. The preparatory stage of his education was to cease, and the course of his studies to be altered, although the teachers were unanimous that their work had been crowned with better results than they had dared to hope for when they undertook it. They had hitherto been afraid to overtask him; but now, in addition to learning a good deal by heart, he had instruction in arithmetic, mathematics, geography, natural history, different languages, German grammar and the history of Austria. One of the best writing-masters in Vienna was called in to improve his illegible hand. He was also busy with gardening, when he and Collin built a mud hut in the park at Schönbrunn, which was pointed out to strangers, not so many years ago, as "The Duke of Reichstadt's Cave."

As there was no longer a soul left who could speak French, he at last learnt to speak German with fluency. At the same time, as it was not intended that he should forget the French language, his tutors took it in turns to speak

German and French with him in lesson hours.

His mother required that one of the court priests should give him religious instruction. He loved to read the Bible, more especially the historical portions. Dietrichstein complained that he was not God-fearing, and, also, that his thoughts always wandered, when he was spoken to on religious subjects.

But still the masters were more satisfied than they were, and in 1817 Dietrichstein wrote to Marie Louise that "the Duke had become more amiable, that he was no longer so passionate, and that he showed himself more friendly to those about him."

The ex-Empress was rarely seen in Vienna; and when her son was ill with measles she never for a moment thought of going to see him, but wrote to Dietrichstein: "I am glad that he is having measles so young, he will therefore not need to be as anxious as I am about smallpox, because I have never had measles."

In August 1817 she wrote to her son:

"In his recent letters, Count Dietrichstein tells me of your industry and your good behaviour, my dear friend! If you only knew what a pleasure and satisfaction this is for me, you would be very glad! Your patience under that little operation also made me feel happy, and brought me the only satisfaction I can have, when I am

away from you—namely, that the diligence and good conduct of my child will always be my comfort.

"That you may see how very pleased I am with you, I send a small gift, which the Count will give you. I shall not see you again before next spring, and it grieves me to think how far off that is! But remember that you lessen my grief by being as well behaved as you have recently been.

"Good-bye, my friend! Rest assured that I often think of you, and that I am fond of you.

"LOUISE." [1]

The child never alluded to his mother; but when his tutor asked him one day if he loved her, he began to cry.

Several members of the Austrian Imperial family treated him most unkindly, but his grandfather pitied the forsaken child. He was fond of him, though he often scolded him; and when the Emperor was present, not one of his sons dared say a cross word to the son of Napoleon. As he grew older, he dined at his table, and had a bench for his toys in his study.

Maria Ludovica died in 1816, and in the following year Francis I. married Carolina Augusta of Bavaria, a beautiful, intelligent woman, who wished to be kind to all. She used to call the

[1] Among the letters left by Marie Louise, this is the most affectionate one she ever wrote to her son.

Duke her "dear little Franzi" and her "dear little son"; when she wrote to him she signed herself, "Your heartily devoted Grandmother."

The young Frenchman amused her and the duchesses with his liveliness, which contrasted so strongly with the formal behaviour of the other families. One day, when the Empress invited him to sit between her and her step-daughter at some court ceremony he ran away from her, shouting: "No, thank you, your Majesty! My place is among men!"

When quite a small child he was allowed to be present at court balls, when he won the hearts of the ladies by his beauty.

A noted ballet-master gave him lessons, and one evening he fell, while dancing; they tried to comfort him about the little mishap, but it was useless.

"What a shame!" he said, blushing, and withdrawing to a corner of the room.

Once, on the occasion of the Emperor's birth-day, Kotzebue's *Die beiden kleinen Auvergnaten* was acted, and the little Duke had his part, in the picturesque costume of a Savoyard, when he gained rapturous applause for his pretty acting.

One evening, an elderly lady of the Court observed in his presence: "France was far better looking in former days!"

"And you were much better looking than you are now!" he rejoined.

He was fascinated by all that was fresh and

attractive ; and he always wanted to be different from his surroundings.

One day he went with Dietrichstein to an exhibition of pictures, just at the time when the secretary was explaining the subject of the paintings. " These," he said, " are temples of valour and honour ! "

The Duke, who was standing a little way off, ran to his tutor and asked him with excited eagerness, " Where are the temples of honour ? "

Now and again, when he had been making good progress, he would be seized with an irresistible impulse to play, and weary his teachers ; and although his liking for study was greater than it had been, he was still capricious and disobedient. Dietrichstein, who wanted to make him a model child, was in despair at his thus losing ground. He complained to the Emperor, who authorised him to use judicious severity, even flogging, if necessary. But the Count, who was really fond of him, thought this too severe, and clung to the hope that he would be able to manage his pupil without using such drastic means.

" His behaviour is insufferable," Collin wrote to the Count, " but the cause is solely because he cannot bear control."

Dietrichstein considered him backward, that more could be expected of him ; but the other masters did not agree with him on this point.

" As a rule, your Excellence thinks all foreign

children are amiable and well brought up," wrote Foresti. "But those who see our boy think him an angel—yes, an angel! I have often heard that the remark has been made!"

About this time, Napoleon sent his physician, O'Meara, to Europe with greetings to his family.

"If you see my son, kiss him for his father," he said, "and tell him from me that he must never forget that he is a French prince by birth! Take every possible trouble to procure reliable details as to how he is being brought up."

O'Meara never had the chance of delivering the father's greetings. It was known in Vienna that his adherents were trying to support the King of Rome, and both the houses, Habsburg and Bourbon, were on the alert to hinder any attempt.

The Emperor Napoleon was ill, and he inquired if he might have an interview with the Austrian representative on the island, in the event of his condition becoming critical, as he desired his last wishes to reach the hands of his son. But the prisoner on St Helena was looked upon as an ever-threatening danger, and not a word of reply was sent to his request.

## CHAPTER X

### Death of the Emperor Napoleon—His Will

THE thoughts of the imprisoned Emperor were continually with his family, but especially with his son. His friends on the island received letters from their relations, but he himself heard nothing from those he loved; for his persecutors had determined that all letters addressed to him should be first read by his English jailers.

He frequently referred to his youth, in conversation, and of the joy he had experienced from his early victories. He spoke too with tenderness of his first wife, to whom he owed his promotion as general, and, also, a good deal of the sympathy of France towards him.

"Josephine was the most amiable and the best of all women," he said. "If only she had given me a son, I should still have been on the throne. Frenchmen would have loved him, just as they love the King of Rome, and I should never have set foot on that flower-decked abyss which brought about my fall."

"My second marriage was my destruction," he said, on another occasion; "for I trusted in the honour and rectitude of the Emperor Francis I."

He was enraged at the heartless conduct of his father-in-law, but, although his "good Louise" had so completely deserted him, he always spoke of her with forbearance.

The report of a plot to rescue Napoleon gave his wife momentary anxiety, but she just resolved to think of him as little as possible, and remarked that, as long as her husband was safe in St Helena, she was perfectly happy! A few months before his death she wrote to Baron Méneval:

"I can congratulate myself on my lot with supreme satisfaction, for here I am both happy and at peace, while my health is just perfect. And the best of all is, that my son is so well disposed towards my father, under the guidance of his excellent tutor, who could hardly be more devoted to him if he were his own son."

The Emperor Napoleon had passed six years in exile and imprisonment, when he exclaimed:

"What a state I am in, I, who used to be so active and buoyant! Monarchs, who are persecuting me, you may rest in peace, you will soon be in absolute security!"

His devotion to "the little King" was the strongest feeling left to him. He did not pine for his lost crown, but he had a burning longing for his child.

On 15th April 1821 he wrote his will with his own hand, and impressed it upon his son

that he must never forget where he was born, nor ever fight against France; but adopt this, his father's, motto: "Everything for the French people!"

Each page of his will bears testimony to his intense love.

"As soon as my son is grown up," he goes on to say, "my mother, brothers and sisters are to join forces with him, in spite of every hindrance offered by Austria. . . . I enjoin upon my son to resume his name of Napoleon when he is of age; and should fortune allow him to claim his throne, my executors will make it their duty to impress upon him what I owe to my old officers, soldiers and servants."

Napoleon left him his orders, his camp bed, his arms, saddlery, spurs, books, and all other personal possessions. He hopes "that these unimportant effects will be dear to him, as a reminder of a father whose name will resound all over the world."

"The memory of me," the Emperor said, with pride, "will be the glory of his life!"

He also left tender words of farewell to Marie Louise in his will; and entreated her eagerly to watch over their child.

"Well, now that I have settled my affairs so cleverly, it would really be a pity if I were not to die," he said. But two days later he called Montholon, and dictated to him several points of advice for his son.

"My son is never to think of avenging my death," he said; "he must learn a lesson from it! God grant that the remembrance of what I have done may never leave him, and that, like me, he may continue to be a Frenchman, to the very tips of his fingers! All his efforts must tend to government in peace, not merely to reign, but to deserve the praise of posterity."

"I wish my son to read, and meditate upon history," he continued, "it is the only true and absolute philosophy. But, no matter what is said, or taught him, it will be of little use if he has no enthusiasm in his heart, no love for what is good, which alone can help him to accomplish great things! I trust he will prove worthy of his fate!"

The Emperor's voice became inaudible; it was impossible for him to continue. Death was near at hand, and he was suffering acutely.

"Those monsters!" he said, alluding to the emperors and kings who were keeping him in prison. "Why did they not shoot me? At any rate, I should have died a soldier's death!"

He begged his physician, Antomarchi, to take out his heart, after death, and send it to Marie Louise. "Tell her that I have always thought tenderly of her, that I never ceased to love her." Then he added: "Tell her all that you have seen, everything that related to my circumstances and my death!"

From the night between the 4th and 5th of

May, till late the following afternoon, Napoleon was wrestling with death, and his whole appearance became completely changed.

During this last dread fight, an awful storm burst over the island, tearing up with savage might trees and shrubs which he himself had planted.

Then, at length, the hurricane ceased, a warm spring wind cleansed the air, and the sun went down in a sea of light.

With his last look, the Emperor sought his son's likeness, and, as the sun sank, General Montholon closed his eyes, while peaceful majesty soon took the place of agonising struggle on his noble countenance.

The mighty conqueror, who will be remembered for centuries, had lived just fifty-one years.

He had wished to rest in French soil, but it was denied to him, and his friends buried him near a spring, where he used to stop and quench his thirst. His name was not mentioned in the funeral Mass that Marie Louise ordered to be read in her palace ; nor in the official announcement in the Parma newspapers that the duchess was a widow. He had divorced his first wife, but the Imperial daughter whom he had put in her place had, in her turn, forsaken and deceived him.

He had murdered the Duc d'Enghien, an innocent member of the house of Bourbon—

but the King of Rome was pining among his worst enemies.

The great Napoleon emptied his cup of sorrow —nobody can deny that in a sense he expiated his misdeeds.

## CHAPTER XI

The Duke of Reichstadt receives the News of his Father's Death — Letters from Marie Louise — Napoleon's Effects

NAPOLEON'S death created excitement all over the world. It was a special messenger from the house of the Rothschilds that brought the news to Vienna, and the Emperor commanded that the son should be told immediately of his father's death.

Dietrichstein was absent, the duty therefore of preparing the boy fell to Foresti, who went to him late in the evening. The child burst into heart-rending weeping when he grasped that he had lost his father, whom he had loved, and thought of, longing for the day to come when the great Emperor would break away from his prison, and fetch his child.

When Collin expressed his sympathy, the following day, the outburst of grief was again painful to see. The great Napoleon had been the embodiment of goodness and greatness to Collin, and with his death the very last hope for the son was gone.

Marie Louise saw the announcement in the *Gazette de Piedmont,* and considered the news incredible. But the details that became known

as to Napoleon's last moments soon silenced her doubts, and she wrote to a friend :

" I confess that the death has been a shock to me ! Although I had never any warm affection for him, I cannot forget that he was my son's father. Most people think that he was harsh to me, but that was certainly never the case ! He was always considerate towards me, and that is surely the only thing one can expect from a political union ! I am therefore much distressed. Although one must be glad that he ended his sorrowful existence in a Christian manner, I could have wished him still many years of fair health—provided he had always lived far away from me ! "

She added in this same letter : " We are having a perfect plague of gnats ! My face is so bitten that I look like a scarecrow. I am glad I have no need to show myself ! "

In spite of gnats, stings and sorrow, the ex-Empress went to the theatre two days afterwards.

The Austrian ambassador in Paris sent her an official notice that Napoleon was dead, and at the same time she had letters from Vienna telling her how deeply her son was mourning for his father.

She wrote to him :

" I have heard, my dear friend, how deeply you are moved by the misfortune that has befallen us both in the death of your father. To write to you and speak of it is the best comfort

for myself! I am sure you feel as acutely as I do; for you would be ungrateful if you could forget all the kindness he showed you in your babyhood. I know that you will strive to imitate his virtues, and at the same time try to avoid the rocks against which he was crushed to death."

The son did not doubt that his mother meant what she said about her grief; he could not guess how completely she had abandoned his father.[1]

Las Cases, who arrived from St Helena a few years before Napoleon's death, had offered her a lock of her husband's hair, which she did not care to accept, and did not even make a reply.

General Gourgaud, about the same time, earnestly entreated her to put herself into communication with her unfortunate husband, but his persuasive letter had not the smallest influence over her.

On his return to Europe, the physician Antomarchi went at once to Parma to take Napoleon's heart, in accordance with her husband's wishes—but she refused to give it a last resting-place.

The Court in Parma was in mourning. Neipperg received him alone, and took from his hands the

[1] When Marie Louise wrote the above, it was about three months before the birth of Neipperg's child; born, according to the court annals, 15th August 1821.

death mask carefully brought over by the physician.

A doctor who, many years later, was called in to see one of the servants of the late ex-Empress, found the man's child playing on the floor with the mask as his toy.

Indifferent as Marie Louise showed herself to her son, on the whole, she was far from neglectful as to his money affairs, and his income in the future.

As soon as he was of age, he would come in for a yearly income of five million gulden from the Bavarian Palatinate estates, and it was considered a certainty that Madame Letitia Bonaparte would bequeath a large portion of her riches to her grandson. No great sum could be expected from his father, whose glorious name must be the fortune left by Napoleon to his child.

It had been the warmest wish of the Emperor that his son should occupy the French throne, and that the recollection of his own heroic deeds should pave the way for him. He considered it more imperative to secure him adherents than to make him the heir of a few million francs. He had therefore ordered that his old soldiers should inherit the greatest part of his fortune, which had been sequestered by the State. Six million francs, in charge of a Paris banker, were left to the friends who had accompanied him to St Helena.

Marie Louise was already indifferent as to the

name he had left, but she ardently wished that his millions should fall to the share of the Duke of Reichstadt, and on his behalf she asked her father to require the Government in Paris to deliver up the amount. In the meantime, the French State had been deaf to his application, and Franics I., who was guardian to his grandson, had to relinquish all rights, on behalf of the Duke of Reichstadt, in France.[1]

In his will, Napoleon had begged different friends to take to the former King of Rome some objects which he had decided ought to be his, on completing his sixteenth year.

General Bertrand was to give him the sword he had borne at Austerlitz, and a gold travelling case, which had been in constant use during his campaigns. His valet Merchand was to take him five boxes which Napoleon had found on the table of Louis XVIII. when he arrived at the Tuileries, on his return from Elba. Montholon

[1] After his death, Marie Louise strove hard to gain possession of the money left by the Emperor Napoleon. On 18th May 1837—when she had satisfied herself that her former demands would never be recognised—she at last sent a document to the lawyer of the royal family in which she, as heiress, formally renounced the inheritance, after the decease of "Napoleon Franz Karl Joseph, Duke of Reichstadt, our son; together with all rights, privileges, and possessions, real and personal property, in France that belonged to the Emperor Napoleon, our esteemed husband." As for our esteemed husband, it was his fortune alone, for which she had never lost her interest!

had charge of the silver service which he had used on St Helena.

In spite of the strenuous efforts made by the executors of the will with reference to these things, the Austrian Government refused them admittance, even to fulfil his last wishes; and the son never received the keepsakes his father had meant for him. The only thing that ever came into his hands was the life-size portrait of Napoleon.

When he was fourteen he was allowed to read his father's history; and, as he grew older, Dietrichstein considered it to be his duty to supply him with the most important books touching on the Imperial period in France. Two large bookcases in his study were filled with works solely on him; and a likeness of his father always hung above his bed, while another stood on his writing-table.

## CHAPTER XII

Death of Professor Collin—Baron Obenaus—The Duke of Reichstadt and Count Dietrichstein

In the autumn of 1823 Professor Collin died, after a short illness; a fearful loss for little Napoleon, or "Franz," as they called him now. This cultured and intelligent man, beyond actual lesson hours, had tried to develop and improve his pupil, who, in his own reticent manner, had let him feel that he was attached to him.

Baron Obenaus, his successor, was a learned man; but he was passionate and disagreeable, a spy upon his pupil.

The boy never took to him, and felt, not without cause, that this "Minister of the Police" made use of him in order to gain information—and his own intimate friend, Prokesch Osten, was of the same opinion.

Obenaus found out, as Dietrichstein and Foresti had done, how different it was to force this spirit of resistance into the groove fixed upon by the Emperor. He found it impossible to enlist his interest in any subject; while the Duke, on his part, found his method of teaching superficial—but, at the same time, pedantic and wearisome.

When his progress was not satisfactory in

every item, his lack of zeal was by no means the sole cause. His imagination was always at work, and he himself confessed that his dreams led him far away from realities to distant realms of fancy, from which it required the strongest efforts to escape.

Ever since his return to Vienna, he had shown keen interest in all military affairs, and when the soldiers passed the castle at noon, each day, he always watched them with delight from the window.

"What do you mean to be when you are grown up?" the Emperor asked him one day.

As he did not reply at once, his grandfather continued: "If you don't know what you wish to be, it will be best for me to make you a priest, which will satisfy the others."

But this roused young Napoleon; he found his tongue, and declared that he had quite decided to be an officer.

He was made an under-officer in his eleventh year; and, although the new dignity is very low down on the military ladder, he was overjoyed at his position, and Dietrichstein tells us he could hardly wait until his uniform was finished.

"Bearing in mind his early days it would have been quite excusable if he had wished for the title of Colonel," added Dietrichstein. "I therefore think his moderation highly commendable."

Although he was absolutely unmusical, and could not distinguish one tune from another, he

grew excited every time he heard a military band; the sound of drums and trumpets was more lovely to his ears than classical tunes to a real musician. He used to exercise the soldiers on duty at the castle, and knew nearly all the rules by heart; then, he was simply overwhelmed with joy when, at the age of thirteen, he was allowed to command a detachment of soldiers on parade, in the presence of his mother and the King of Naples.

In spite of his dislike of regular school routine, he followed his military studies with perseverance, and everything connected with this course was learned quickly and willingly.

He listened to lectures on historical statistics and peoples with avidity; and, young as he was, expressed himself with clearness on events in universal history, and their mutual connection.

His father was his hero; next to him he admired Hannibal and Julius Cæsar—in his eyes the latter was the greatest Roman, because he had won most battles.

When he was to begin to learn to ride, and a small steed was brought to him, he declined to mount.

"I will have a big horse like my father; I'm going to war!" he shouted.

"My father made the Emperor Francis the present of a horse," he said, at another time, and added impressively:

"It was a war horse!"

As a little boy, he already talked of being a general, and when one of his masters asked what he thought he must learn to become one, he answered curtly: "Nothing else but drill soldiers and lead them forward—except that I must be able to do sums!"

Although Dietrichstein appeared to be very severe, he was in reality weak with him.

He sheltered and spoilt him, in some respects, almost as if he had been a girl.

The Count hoped that he would one day play an important part in the world, though signs seemed to show that he was merely bringing him up as an Austrian prince; in his inner self he felt that, in due course, the boy would become Emperor of France.

But, at the same time, he had much to censure. The unbearable restraint had made him nervous and bitter. Dietrichstein complained that he neglected all his admonitions; and was furious with him that, even now, when he was so soon to take a place in the world, he simply would not exert himself to learn German correctly, but calmly used senseless expressions, even in his letters.

On receiving one of these, that swarmed with faults, he was exceedingly annoyed. "If you really," he wrote, during the summer of 1826, "consider me as your greatest benefactor,[1] which

[1] The Duke of Reichstadt had made use of this expression as to his tutor, in a letter to him.

I am, in so far as for eleven years I have devoted attention to your education which ought to have brought forth perfect fruit, how can you calmly take me by surprise (as you evidently meant to do) and send me an illegible letter, which is full of erasures and proofs of your habitual thoughtlessness ! "

On other occasions the Count tried to arouse his sense of honour. He reminded him of his ancestry, and of what the world would expect from him ; he told him of conversations he had had about him with men of position, who were following his education with excitement.

The son of Napoleon was confirmed, 1st August 1828, in the royal chapel at Baden, near Vienna.

The Emperor led him to the altar, and the sacred ceremony was performed by the Cardinal Archduke Rudolph.

## CHAPTER XIII

France and Napoleon's Son—Barthélemy and "Le Fils de l'Homme"

It was the opinion of Metternich, and many others, that, after the death of Napoleon the Great, the Bonaparte family would absolutely fall to pieces. But in the meantime this was shown to be a grave fallacy on all hands; the martyr of St Helena and his tragic fate were being discussed. Even his enemies forgot their hatred, while the wonderful triumphs he had obtained for France were more keenly discussed than ever. There was hardly a family that did not possess his likeness, and in the poorest cottage he was placed between Our Saviour and the Blessed Virgin.

Even since his banishment, efforts were made in different ways to keep the remembrance of the fallen dynasty well in mind. The veterans had roused the enthusiasm of the younger officers and soldiers with stirring stories of his campaigns, while verses and pamphlets kept their sympathy alive with the King of Rome, of whom recent likenesses were lavishly sent out into the world, while garters, snuff-boxes and knives with his portrait were to be had for a mere nothing.

The street musicians on the boulevards sang

a touching ballad, which they called "Little Napoleon's Prayer," in which he complained that his father did nothing for him, and, what was more, had given his throne to the Bourbons.

It had no effect in Paris to be assured from Vienna that there was no longer a Napoleon, only a Duke of Reichstadt, when it was reported at the same time that Joseph Bonaparte, from America, was eagerly working for his brother's son.

The Duc de Bassano called Louis XVIII. a usurper, and declared that Napoleon II. was the rightful ruler in France. Even Fouché, who had done so much to secure the return of the Bourbons, offered his help to re-establish the Empire.

During the lifetime of Napoleon, his adherents had sympathised equally with father and son; but on his death they naturally placed their hopes on his heir. Of far more value than pictures, emblems and poems, sent broadcast to gain the favour of the people, was the incapability of Louis XVIII. and his followers, coupled with their harsh persecution of the other side.

There were three revolutionary parties anxious to destroy the yoke of the Bourbons: the Bonapartists, the Liberals and the Republicans.

Savary, the leader of the Bonapartists, had chosen for their war-cry: "Long live Napoleon II."; and his numerous followers in the army were ready to draw their swords at a sign from

their head. Napoleon's son was to bear the Imperial title, but he was not to be the absolute ruler that his father had been. Both the other parties declared a republic to be their aim. In the interim, they united to fight for the Constitution of 1791.

The Bonapartists saw clearly that they could expect no help from the Austrian Emperor, nor from Metternich. On the other hand, they appealed, again and again, to the Archduke Charles, whom they looked upon as the ally of the Empress's son. During the year in which Napoleon died, one of his friends wrote to the old archduke that the French were well aware of his interest in the boy, and blessed him for his kindness to him.

"The court in Vienna," in the words of the letter, "had better take care of its interests in France, instead of allowing itself to be led by the nose by Russia and England, who would destroy the influence of Austria."

The letter referred to the French minister Decazes as their most influential ally, who was to be sent to Vienna as ambassador, and, in course of conversation with this statesman, the archduke would easily convince himself that the former favourite of Louis XVIII. was a sincere adherent of Napoleon II.[1]

[1] The letter was dated London; but the signature was illegible, and no trace as to the writer has ever been discovered.

Every detail that the archduke received referring to the Duke of Reichstadt was undoubtedly sent on to Metternich, who had long suspected that Decazes was calculating on the downfall of the Bourbon dynasty by the death of Louis XVIII. The letter made a great impression upon him, and he at once, secretly, acquainted the French Government with its contents.

Frenchmen again and again journeyed to Vienna with the intention of carrying off Napoleon's son, and on the evening of 24th August 1826, as the boy was driving with one of his uncles, to see some illuminations, a letter was thrown into the carriage by an elegant young man. It fell on to the knee of the Archduke, who knew well that it was meant for his sister's son, but he quickly put it into his pocket, and gave it to the Emperor. It contained an earnest request to young Napoleon to go to France, without delay.

"Sire!—Thirty million subjects are pining for your return," was the anonymous missive.

It was current talk in Paris that Napoleon II. had escaped to Spain, and would soon arrive in France, where his cause waxed stronger and stronger, in addition to his innumerable adherents in Switzerland and Belgium.

Louis XVIII. died, and the accession of Charles X. aggravated the cause of the Bourbons.

To the extreme annoyance of the Royalists,

Béranger had published a poem, in 1821, in which the King of Rome impresses on the Duc de Bordeaux that the fate of the Emperor's son should serve as a warning to his cousin that a similar fate may easily overtake him.[1]

But of still more stirring effect than Béranger's poem was Barthélemy's " Le Fils de l'Homme," which fell like a bomb in the French capital.

Barthélemy, who had been Napoleon's opponent, became his staunch adherent, after his fall, and published a poem, " Napoléon en Egypte," to glorify the deceased Emperor, and even went to Vienna in order to present it to his son. He arrived at the capital on New Year's Eve, 1828, and went the same day to the Minister of Police, to ask permission to remain there for a short time.

After some personal questions as to the cause of his visit, he received permission to remain a month. He had letters of introduction from men of position, and access to the best literary circles.

A few days after his arrival, he called upon Dietrichstein, who received him with cordiality. Barthélemy describes young Napoleon's tutor

[1] " Les deux Cousins, ou Lettre d'un petit Roi à un petit Duc."

The son of Napoleon and Marie Louise and the Duc de Bordeaux were both descended on the mother's side from the former King and Queen of Naples, and might be styled cousins.

as one of the most amiable and intelligent men at the Austrian court. He handed him a copy of his book, and added that he wished to give it personally to the Duke of Reichstadt, when the friendly countenance of the tutor immediately became serious.

" Have you really come all the way to Vienna to see the young prince ? " he asked, after a few minutes' silence. " Who has induced you to take such a step ? And is it possible that you expect to be successful in this undertaking ? That which you demand is absolutely impossible."

The poet replied candidly that it was solely his own intense desire that had urged him to take the journey. Not a soul in France had the least conception that it was so difficult to interview Napoleon's son, and he added that the precautions to prevent the Duke from coming into contact with dangerous persons could not possibly affect him, a simple burgher, who had never taken the smallest part in politics.

" I do not even ask to see the prince alone," he continued ; " I am quite willing that you should be present, and, if necessary, ten others ! And if one single word escapes my lips that could cause uneasiness to a cautious government, I agree to end my days as a state prisoner in Austria."

Dietrichstein explained that he was quite certain Barthélemy's intentions were absolutely good ; though he insisted that it was impossible

to swerve from the express commands of the Emperor that the Duke was not to receive visitors.

" Perhaps you are afraid that conversation with a stranger would reveal secrets to him, or inspire him with dangerous expectations ? " asked Barthélemy. " But how can you prevent that, either publicly or secretly, a letter or petition may be handed to him, during a walk or elsewhere ? "

" You may be assured that the prince neither hears, sees nor reads anything but what we will that he shall see, hear and read," answered Dietrichstein curtly.

" Napoleon's son is therefore far less free than we in France suppose ? " asked the poet.

" The prince is not a prisoner, but his position is a very remarkable one ! "

Then, as Barthélemy continued pressing his questions upon him, the Count said :

" Have the goodness to ask me nothing further. And, in any case, I could not reply. I can only beg you to abandon the plan which has led you here."

" But you will not refuse to give him this book in the name of the author ? " said Barthélemy. " The prince has surely a library, and my volume is not so dangerous that it needs must be excluded."

The Count looked perplexed, and evidently found it very painful to refuse both his requests.

The poet asked him to read the work; and on taking leave, he expressed the hope that, after the perusal, he would be less severe.

Two weeks passed, and as he heard nothing from Dietrichstein, he repeated his request to be allowed to pay his respects to the Duke of Reichstadt.

"You are far too eager to see him," answered the Count. "You must not cherish the thought of offering him your book. It is charming as a poem, but dangerous for Napoleon's son. Your picturesque language and vivid descriptions, the colours with which you paint history, might arouse enthusiasm in the youth, and sow the seed of ambition in him, that could only end in discontent with his present position."

Barthélemy wished to reply, but Dietrichstein appeared to pay no heed to his words. He bowed, and the poet had to retire.

He remained some weeks in Vienna, and made several attempts to catch a glimpse of the Duke. His wish was at last fulfilled, one evening in the court theatre.

The Emperor and his family were just entering, and the curtain rising in silence, when a door, close to the royal box, was opened, and in semi-darkness he suddenly saw the son of Napoleon.

Barthélemy describes the youth with glowing enthusiasm. He has his father's fine features, his mother's clear complexion and slight figure;

but his pale anxious face looks as if life and death were struggling for the mastery.

" Dans la loge voisine une porte s'ouvrit.
Et, dans la profondeur de cette enceinte obscure,
Apparut sont à coup une pale figure.
. . . . . .
Je m'écriais : C'est lui ! . . .
Oui, ce corps, cette tête où la tristesse est peinte,
Du sang qui les forma portent la double empreinte.
Je ne sais toutefois. . . . Je ne puis sans douleur
Contempler ce visage éclatant de pâleur.
On dirait que la vie à la mort s'y mélange. . . ."

Shortly after his return to Paris, the poet published his famous " Le Fils de l'Homme," in which, with glowing expressions, he reminded the world that the son of the great Napoleon was still living.

The French Government confiscated his poem, but not before thousands of copies had been sold, and the description read, with deep emotion, of the imprisonment of the son at his grandfather's court, where he was hindered from seeing the heroic verses touching on his father and himself :

" Légataire du monde, en naissant Roi de Rome,
Tu n'es plus aujourd'hui que le Fils de l'Homme.
Pourtant quel fils de roi, contre ce nom obscur
N'échangerait son titre et son sceptre futur ? "

Barthélemy comforted his people by saying he would surely break his fetters, and that the day would as surely dawn when, led by his father's star, he would return to his native land.

The main point of the poem lay in these concluding words. The Council Hall was filled to overflowing with important persons, many of whom had come to look at the young poet, who stood accused by the Government. In spite of the eloquence of his counsel, and that he himself delivered a brilliant speech in verse, he was condemned to three months' imprisonment, and to pay a fine of three thousand francs.

But the cause of the Bourbons suffered more than the poet ; for it was only now that Frenchmen began to turn their thoughts to Austria.

The Government wrote to all their public officials : " Napoleon's son belongs neither to history nor to France."

But Charles X. was made to feel that the great conqueror's son was still living.

" Le Fils de l'Homme " was on everyone's lips, and Barthélemy, whom his opponents thought to crush, was enjoying a splendid triumph.

## CHAPTER XIV

The former King of Rome made an Austrian Captain—His Character and Personality—His First Meeting with Prokesch-Osten

YOUNG Napoleon was eager and impatient to enter upon active military service, while studying the details of fortification and artillery work under the guidance of Colonel Schindler and Major Weiss, with whom he made rapid progress.

On the approach of his "name day," 1826, Marie Louise begged the Emperor to give her pleasure by creating her son an officer. He said he would, subject to the approval of Dietrichstein. But his tutor opposed his entrance into the army, mainly because the Duke's physician had begged him to strengthen his views on the subject.

It was not till a few weeks after his confirmation, 18th August 1828, that he at last gained his wish.

"You have long been hoping for this?" said his grandfather.

"Yes, your Majesty?" asked the youth, rather shyly, for he did not know the point of the Emperor's reference, or if he was joking.

"Yes," continued Francis. "As a proof

that I am satisfied with you, and that I expect great things from you, I appoint you captain from to-day. Be a brave man—I wish it for you with all my heart ! "

This appointment was an event in his life, and, according to his own words, it made him the happiest man on earth. In his joy he thought of Foresti, who had given him his first military instruction, and wrote to him :

" DEAREST COMRADE,—We must solemnly take up every branch in our military system, and nothing shall prove too difficult for me ! My ambition and the desire to show myself worthy of this distinction will alter me. I will lay aside all childish things, and become a man, in the true sense of the word. This is my firm intention."

But, in spite of his title of Captain, he was not allowed to enter on military service. Dietrichstein remained firm that this was not to be, until his development was more complete, and he himself more mature. The pupil, who longed to escape from his tutor's supervision as quickly as possible, boasted of his rights, which led to frequent disputes.

The Count wrote to the Emperor and to Marie Louise : " I repeat that there is no hurry, and that his physical, moral and intellectual development make it advisable that we wait

until he is twenty. The rapid growth of the prince, his attractive appearance and behaviour, must not mislead us! The true standard in this case is acquirements and character. While the latter is so unformed, and his intellectual development so faulty, it would be extremely dangerous to allow him his liberty too early!"

It was customary in Austria for young men of good family to become officers at a very early age. But when Dietrichstein was reminded of the fact, he rejoined that these youths were wanting, as a rule, in the knowledge necessary to fill their high appointments.

"Why," asked the Count, "should we place a prince in the same class as these—a prince from whom we expect so much? Will our expectations be fulfilled if we let his wild inclinations and uncontrolled disposition have free scope to run riot? If we thus early make the path easy for intrigue, flattery and deceit, against which we have to contend, what chance have we, if he is withdrawn from necessary supervision? His good looks, his sharp and striking observations, have often roused the remark that it would soon be time for him to take his place in the world. But those who know the prince thoroughly cannot acquiesce in these views."

But, at the same time that he was unshaken in his views that under no circumstances should the boy's wishes be granted, he did his utmost

to enliven the course of his studies. He was well aware of the public interest in the progress of his pupil, which made it all the more imperative that there should be no disappointment.

"The army hopes and believes that he has inherited his father's genius, and will lead them on to victory," he wrote to his grandfather and mother. "This is the only thing that can account for the enthusiasm he excites, in both officers and men—enthusiasm shown him even as a child, which increases each time he appears in public."

The Count urged that he should go into society, and become known in the world. He wished that his pupil should be looked upon as other princes, and that the curiosity which had hitherto belonged to everything concerning Napoleon's son should be reduced to more reasonable limits. On the other hand, he repeated his warning, again and again, not to allow him too much independence.

On the completion of his eighteenth year, both the Emperor and Marie Louise wished him to be declared of age; but the date was deferred, on account of the advice of his tutor.

The bitter disappointment of the prince was boundless, his inactivity irritated him, and with morbid exaggeration, his thoughts recurred again and again to the expectations that accompanied his birth. The memory of his father inflamed

his imagination, or sank him in despair, but never left him.

He was an Austrian on his mother's side, and by education. But on his father's side, and by birth, he was a Frenchman, heart and soul. His feverish longing to fulfil his father's last wish could only be quenched by his being able to feel himself at home in Austria, and he struggled with every nerve to think how he could free himself from his undignified position, without one faint hope as to how it could be. And if, for one moment, his powerful imagination had conquered every obstacle, his mother's connections, and his white Austrian uniform, at once recalled him to cold reality.

One of his most conspicuous traits was his obstinacy. If asked why he did one thing, and not the other, he usually replied: "Because it suits me," or: "Because it does not suit me, and that's all!" He often quoted Napoleon's well-known words: "Reculer c'est se perdre," and: "Je ne veux pas avoir tort!"

"He understands what he *will* understand, and his body bears what it *will* bear," Obenaus used to say. "He knows how to avoid what he does not wish; he eagerly pursues his end, and he looks upon it as undignified to go back one step—nothing but the direct necessity will make him yield." [1]

[1] Obenaus to Francis I., 18th January 1831.

His father was fond of theatricals, and had certainly been a brilliant actor on the boards of life, when it suited his purpose. Napoleon II. was an actor too, forced by circumstances to become one.

"He is a remarkable actor," said Metternich: "just like his father!"

During his whole life in Austria, he had been on the constant stretch to prevent those around him from gaining an insight into his inner life of thought.

Accustomed as he had been from his earliest childhood to live among people who were either indifferent, or even hostile towards him, he had acquired an unusual power of adapting himself to each in turn, accepting with a smile all opposition, absolutely unmoved.

He had inherited a full share of his father's Southern blood, but also his mother's lack of energy; and his doctor spoke of a singular mixture of incapacity and over-esteem in him.

What wonder that there should have been contradictions in his character, and that he was under the influence of so many conflicting currents?

To those about him, he was devoid of illusions, like any old man; but he was a youth, and romanced, and dreamt of honour and renown, of leading large armies to certain victory.

He was blamed at Court for his persistent reserve and capriciousness. It was all unjust;

PROKESCH-OSTEN

he was cautious, certainly, too much on the alert not to see the traps laid for him.

The more numerous the plans that occupied his brain, the more careful he became to conceal his thoughts and feelings ; he was a stranger to nearly all around him, and adopted a mask of coldness and unconcern to prevent even one, being singled out as his trusted friend.

Sorrowful days had made him sore and suspicious, and yet he longed to be understood in his loneliness ; besides, in a higher degree than for most youths, he needed a friend, in whom he could confide.

When he was about nineteen he made the acquaintance of Anton Prokesch-Osten, who became invaluable to the young Duke, and thoroughly deserved the trust reposed in him.

Prokesch-Osten was born in Gratz, 1795, and became a gifted officer, diplomatist and author. Although he had fought against Napoleon in the war of 1813, he admired him, and had published a treatise on his battles of Ligny, Quatrebras and Waterloo, which had created no small sensation.

In June 1830 the Emperor Francis was travelling in Styria, with the Empress, his daughter, Marie Louise, who was on a visit to her father, and the Duke of Reichstadt.

Prokesch-Osten had recently returned to Gratz, after an absence of some years in the East, where he had won the confidence of his sovereign, and

his counsellors, by his wonderful communications respecting both Greek and Egyptian conditions.

He belonged to a burgher family, who were labelled "revolutionary," and he himself was looked upon with an unfavourable eye by the Minister of Police. But the Emperor had recently ennobled him, with the title of "Ritter von Osten"; and Metternich himself, who knew him to be a free, staunch Liberal, thought highly of him, and was glad of his diplomatic services. His good opinion was strengthened by that of his private secretary, Friedrich von Gentz, who, in spite of considerable difference in age, was a very intimate friend.

Prokesch-Osten was invited to dine at the castle during the Emperor's visit in Gratz, and placed opposite to him, by the side of the Duke of Reichstadt, when this meeting with Napoleon's son made a deep impression upon him.

The Empress and the Archduke John questioned him eagerly about his travels, and kept him chatting for some long time after they rose from table. On the other hand, the attractive young Duke, with deep blue eyes and noble expression, remained absolutely silent.

But, on taking leave, he pressed the hand of Prokesch as though they were friends of many years' standing, and simply said:

"I have known you a long while!" But, though Prokesch was attracted by him, he was

far too much a man of the world to take the words for more than a polite expression, and he was therefore surprised when Dietrichstein appeared the following morning, to beg him most cordially to go and call on Napoleon's son.

On fulfilling his promise, a couple of hours subsequently, he found the young man's behaviour totally different from that of the previous day. Then his manner bore the impression of strict self-control; now he came forward and greeted his guest in a bright, lively manner, as he held out both hands, and repeated, with a confiding look:

"I have known you a long while!" adding: "And I have liked you a long while! You defended my father's honour at a time when all others spoke ill of him. I have read your book on the battle of Waterloo, and impressed every line of it on my mind! I have twice translated it—into French and into Italian."

The previous evening, when the Duke was not present, Prokesch had made the suggestion that he should be created King of Greece, which seemed to meet with the approval of the Emperor, and many of those who had heard the remark.

Count Dietrichstein then led the conversation to consider the condition of the country; and, finally, the Emperor Napoleon became their topic.

All that his son had said breathed the warmest

admiration and love for his father, and maintained his earnest wish to train himself on his lines. Prokesch was astonished at his knowledge of military affairs, and his clever, decisive opinions.

"Among the officers in Gratz on this occasion there is certainly not one who has such keen insight and reliable military information."

The Duke complained of his loneliness, and that he saw none but paid officials, or folk of mediocre position. He said that he had not come across anybody who could guide him on strategic questions—and begged Prokesch to become his teacher.

"Stay with me," he said heartily; "make the sacrifice for me, and knit your future to mine! We two can understand each other!"

Prokesch was doubtful as to his suitability for this responsible work, and tried to explain to the Duke that he had been too hasty in forming an opinion of him.

But Dietrichstein found the young man's expressions quite natural, and agreed with him.

The conversation was cut short by an important visit which could not be denied, and Prokesch went forward to welcome Marie Louise. He had hardly taken a seat near to the ex-Empress when her son appeared, and they talked together of his early childhood. Marie Louise then inquired after a French officer who had accompanied her

and the King of Rome from Paris to Blois in 1814, whom Prokesch had met in the East; and he had to relate to her and the Duke all that the officer had told him concerning that fateful flight.

## CHAPTER XV

Prokesch-Osten and the Duke of Reichstadt—Charles X. driven from his Throne

THE day following that first visit to the Duke, Prokesch-Osten wrote thus to Dietrichstein :

"I am so agreeably surprised at the intelligence, the knowledge and the judgment displayed by your exalted pupil during our interview yesterday, that I deeply regret to have let slip an opportunity for a conversation which for me would have been an honour and a pleasure. When one bears such a great name as he does, and even as a child has had such a singular fate, and moreover is so gifted, living too under such unusual conditions, he must be destined by Providence for something great! Ordinary people can do no more than is ordinary even when placed in the highest ranks. But the highly gifted ones—and among these I reckon your Excellency's gifted pupil—have duties to the world and to history! I long for permission to repeat my visit, and I desire nothing more eagerly than to deserve the good opinion which his Highness has formed of me."

In reply, he received a most friendly invitation to call upon him the next day, and, in fact, as frequently as possible.

At this same time he was commanded by the Emperor to be present at the audience of the following morning; but on his arrival he found the hall so full of applicants that, instead of waiting for the old monarch, he hastened off to his grandson. It was just eight o'clock, and the young man was on the point of starting for his ride, which he postponed, in order to welcome his early visitor.

Their conversation was again intimate and confidential, Prokesch repeating that the Duke should try for the throne of Greece, which seemed to attract him.

"But I am rather too young," he said. "I should not be allowed a free hand!"

It was easy for his friend to glean, even in this interview, that his wishes were directed towards a higher goal, and another throne than that of Greece.

Dietrichstein had been present during the earlier part of the conversation, and when he had left, the Duke took hold of Prokesch's hand.

"Tell me the truth! Am I really of no use? What do you think of my future?" he asked. "Will Europe allow the son of the great Emperor to occupy a subordinate position? How can my duty as a Frenchman combine with my duty towards Austria? Yes, I will go, if France calls me, not an anarchical, but an Imperial France! And if Europe attempts

to drive me from my father's throne, I will fight the whole of Europe! But is there such a thing as an Imperial France? I don't see it! The few votes there are have no weight!"

His Austrian well-wishers had tried to comfort him by telling him he would one day be a powerful leader of their army, a new Prince Eugène for Austria.[1]

"If Fate will not allow me to return to France, it is my ambition to become a Prince Eugène here," he repeated. "I am attached to my grandfather; I am a member of his house, and I am ready to defend Austria with my sword against any foe—not against France!"

The thoughts which had been seething in his mind all these years were poured forth to Prokesch like a torrent. He again spoke to him of his father, and how all had misunderstood him. He simply pined for explanations about him, and to be able to grasp the political situation in Europe, repeating piteously: "Oh, if only you would stay with me!"

Prokesch gave him his hand, and said: "Let us talk about that later on!"

[1] Prince Eugène of Savoy was born in France, 1663. He was to have entered the Church, but preferred the army, and, when his wish was uncourteously denied by Louis XIV. and his Minister of War, he enlisted in the Austrian service, where he earned great renown by the brilliant victories he won for the Empire. He died at Vienna, 1736.

They met the following two days, but only in the presence of others, and early on the third day Dietrichstein again sought Prokesch. He complained that his pupil's sole interest was in military and mathematical studies.

" He is really good," he added, " but his pride and obstinacy have hardened him."

The Count called him proud, Prokesch thought him humble. It was in complete trust that he had stretched out his hand to this strange man, sure that he who had defended his father's honour, would prove a steadfast friend to himself.

Everything that could remind him of France had been taken from him, but Prokesch talked to him of Napoleon and the Empire, in spite of the supervision to which he was subjected ; and he was the first, perhaps the only one, with whom the Duke was quite open.

To him he confided his hope for the future, and many things which had troubled him, became easier to bear when he was with his clear-sighted friend, who again and again smoothed away all doubt and bitterness.

The Duke returned to Vienna with the Imperial family ; and, on leaving, Prokesch gave him a gold coin with the head of Alexander the Great, which he had brought from the East, and which the young man wore round his neck until his death.

Shortly after the departure of the Court from

Gratz, Prokesch left for Switzerland, and on his arrival at Zürich heard, to his astonishment, that the three days' revolution of July had overturned the throne of the Bourbons, and that, of still greater importance, Frenchmen were wishing for Napoleon II. to return and be their Emperor. But, at the same time, he heard with sorrow of the current opinion that the court of Austria had done its utmost to disparage him, alleging that he was weak of intellect, and that his development was defective.

In spite of these rumours, there is not the least doubt that he would have been chosen Emperor if he had shown himself in the French capital at the critical moment, or if the Austrian ambassador in Paris had spoken a word of encouragement to his adherents.

The Duke of Padua begged him to do so, but the minister replied :

" I do not know Napoleon's son ! I only know the son of Marie Louise."

Then, like an impenetrable wall, Metternich stood between the Emperor's son and the French people.[1]

And French officers were not disposed to risk

[1] After the death of the Duke of Reichstadt, Metternich told Prokesch-Osten that when General Belliard came to Vienna, as Louis Philippe's ambassador, he himself was in possession of a document in which Belliard and a number of other influential Frenchmen pledged themselves to take Napoleon's son back to Paris in triumph, if Austria would let him go.

their posts and means without the promise of support from Vienna. "The old Imperialists are either ungrateful or worn out!" wrote Victor Hugo to the ex-King Joseph.

The majority were not prepared for Louis Philippe in succession to Charles X., and doubted whether he would be capable of holding his own. Then the Napoleon faction began to bestir itself, and the day after the abdication of the king, appeals to the French people were issued, reminding them that the King of Rome had been proclaimed Emperor of France, 22nd June 1815. Joseph Bonaparte wrote to numbers of statesmen, urging the cause of Napoleon II. in the warmest terms; and when the Duc d'Orleans was proclaimed King he sent a strong protest to the French parliament, in which he maintained that, in consequence of the proclamation of 1815, Napoleon's son was their only legitimate sovereign.

Queen Hortense, who was then living in Switzerland, could view the situation with clearer eyes than her brother-in-law, on the other side of the Atlantic, and wrote thus to her son, the subsequent Napoleon III., 21st August 1830:

"The moment was too critical! On the one hand a child, whom nobody knows, who lives far away, and who would probably not be allowed to come. On the other hand, a prince born and bred in France, who has all the qualities

desired, and who, moreover, is in our midst! I thought all along that he would be chosen; it could not be otherwise."

The Duke of Reichstadt was living at Schönbrunn when Prokesch returned from his travels. Dietrichstein hastened to him, begging him to go to his friend, and telling him that Francis I. had decided to allow his grandson his own separate establishment.

He expressed his anxiety as to the hopes and fears of his pupil, and was much annoyed at the carelessness and indifference in the choice of officers who were now to form his household.

The Duke had earnestly begged that Prokesch might be appointed his adjutant, but Metternich had erased his name from the list, saying:

"No — not Prokesch! I myself require him."

But still he had not lost all hope, and had written repeatedly to his mother, entreating her influence and co-operation, which were never promised; and when he begged her at last to appeal to the Emperor, she replied that, with the exception of the Archdukes Charles and John, the whole court was opposed to Prokesch, who, they were afraid, was making plans far too high flown.

The intercourse between the two friends was very hearty, their conversation being mainly on

the political events in France, where the change of monarchs had made a deep impression on young Napoleon. He regretted that Charles X. had been deposed so hastily, but Prokesch comforted him by saying that Louis Philippe's government would merely form an interlude, and that he himself would become all the more matured for his high position.

The Duke had read the scandals published in foreign papers touching himself, and it was a blow to him. He attached great importance to all that was thought and said of him, and did his utmost to make a favourable impression abroad.

"Answer me an important question," he said. "Does the world really think that I am as incapable as the papers say, and that my teachers have intentionally narrowed and crippled my intellect?"

"Don't be anxious on that score," replied Prokesch. "You are seen every day, and even those who do not understand the circumstances cannot look at you without being positive that these reports are malicious lies!"

He told him that both in Germany and Switzerland he had met with men of standing who thought of him with interest, and had remarked that Napoleon's son was the only guarantee for the safety of Europe.

One evening, when he went to see the young prince, he found him bending over the Memoirs of Antomarchi, which contained his father's will.

"In the fourth paragraph of the first article are instructions for my life," he said. This was the one in which Napoleon urged him never to forget that he was born a French prince.

They spoke further of the future, discussing different possibilities which might occur, and seeking for even one ray of light to guide them to the goal of their wishes. Prokesch advised, with the clearer views of a matured man, and did not disguise the truth from him. But, at the same time, he was ready to put up with disgrace and persecution in his cause; or to wield his sword courageously in his service—at the right moment.

Others tried to shake the Duke's confidence, and in every possible way to mar his trustful waiting. Gustavus Neipperg (the general's son by his first wife), who was devoted to him, earnestly besought him to be cautious, as Prokesch was daily to be seen with Metternich.

But neither gossip nor intrigues could shake the Duke's confidence, in spite of all that was reported to him.

"I do not know these people," he would say, as he embraced his friend, "but I know you! There is no place, neither in your heart, nor mine, for unworthy suspicion."

## CHAPTER XVI

The Poles want young Napoleon for their King—Efforts of the Imperial Family to approach him—The Countess Camerata

THE monarchs of Europe did not care to be reminded of Napoleon's son ; the great name he bore was alarming to both kings and emperors, but the people looked upon him as a deliverer.

On the outbreak of the Polish disturbance, a French officer rode through the streets of Warsaw, shouting :

" Long live Napoleon II., King of Poland ! " Crowds followed the horseman, repeating his cry with enthusiasm, and distributing likenesses of the Duke in Polish national costume.

He loved the Poles, on the ground of their bravery, and the devotion they had shown to his father. He hated the Russians, longed to attack them, and frequently said that it was a great mistake of Austria to work in the interest of Russia.

" There is not the slightest doubt," says Prokesch, " that he would joyfully, and without a second's hesitation, have consented to be carried off to Poland, if the Poles would have ventured on such a daring step ! "

He was as much interested in their struggle for freedom as if it had been his own affair, and full of the deepest anxiety lest they should fail in the contest.

"I often look at myself in the glass," he said one day to Obenaus, "and I think this had once worn a crown! Now it has lost its glory." He continued:

"If the Poles choose me for their king, I will keep the balance even between Russia and Austria."

And as he said the words, a mirror he was holding fell, broken to bits. He was very superstitious, and looked upon the accident as a serious warning.

The project of making him King of Poland, and thus raising a strong bulwark against Russia, was a topic of conversation in the highest circles of Vienna, and the clever Princess Gasalchowitch, *née* Esterhazy, eagerly discussed the plan with Metternich, acting as spokeswoman for many of her countrymen; but the chancellor declared emphatically that Napoleon's son must be excluded from any throne.

But this was by no means the view of the majority. Many Frenchmen were confident that he would become King of Greece, and, although Louis Philippe was then occupying the French throne, public opinion in Vienna pointed to him as the future Emperor of France.

His father's family longed to get into touch

with him, but all their efforts were fruitless; and not even relations passing through Vienna could get a glimpse of him; while all correspondence with any one of them was strictly prohibited.

We know that it was almost an impossibility to approach him, and that he was a prisoner, though in golden chains. In a letter from Vienna to Paris, 1831, are the words:

"A keeper is always in attendance."

The ex-King, Joseph Bonaparte, sent young Fouché, son of Napoleon's minister already mentioned, to Vienna, with letters to the Emperor, Marie Louise and Metternich, describing in well-chosen words the dangers that threatened Austria and the whole of Europe in the present political crisis, and urging upon them most seriously to send young Napoleon to France.

"He can come alone," he wrote; "he only needs to wear the tricolour scarf over his shoulder, and Napoleon II. will be proclaimed Emperor of the French."

Lucien Bonaparte asked for a passport to Vienna, but he was told he must have the consent of Metternich, and state his plans.

Far bolder and more resolute than the Emperor's brothers was his niece, Napoleone Camarata, daughter of his eldest sister, Elisa Bachiocci, a pretty woman of twenty-four, the wife of an Italian nobleman. No Amazon could have looked more aggressive in appearance, if

she chose, for she could handle her weapons like a trooper, and even her sharply defined features were strikingly like those of her Uncle Napoleon.

The accounts of the July revolution had brought her hot blood to boiling point, and she loudly complained that she had not been able to take a personal part in the disturbance of the French capital. Without seeking advice she resolved to go to Vienna, and carry off her cousin.

Under pretext of visiting her father and brother, who lived within the boundary of Austria, she asked for a passport, telling the Austrian ambassador that she considered herself an Austrian subject equally with her father. But it struck him that this pretty young head was hatching dangerous plans, so he wrote thus to the Minister of Police in Vienna :

" I venture to say that Countess Camarata has no political motives. She is naturally proud of her descent, and she resembles her deceased uncle. She is fond of horses, dogs and amusement ; but she has neither talent, composure nor money enough, to enter upon political undertakings."

By means of a letter from her, received in Venice, it was at once ascertained that she was going to Trieste on an important mission. The Minister of Police in that town determined to keep a watchful eye on her ; besides, her

whole appearance was conspicuous, and she wore man's clothes, with innumerable tricolour ornaments.

Every inquiry was made, but there appeared to be no cause for suspicion, and as her passport was correct she was allowed to leave. After spending a month with her aunt, the ex-Queen of Naples, she went on to Vienna.

The loneliness which the Duke had felt all through his childhood had been lessened by the devotion of Prokesch-Osten, who believed in him, and hoped to be a help in restoring to him his father's throne. He had enlarged his views, and explained to him many points touching his father and his relations.

The Duke had read that his Uncle Joseph had demanded his return to his native land, which proved that he had not only well-wishers, but active workers on his behalf.

One evening in November 1830, it had been arranged that he should visit Obenaus, and as he stepped into the dark passage leading to his tutor's apartments a young lady, enveloped in a long Scotch plaid, came towards him. In the dim light he could only see the outline of her features, but they reminded him of the picture of his father.

The Countess Camarata had long been watching for a chance of meeting him, and had caught sight of him more than once, riding in the Prater. Then she had managed to bribe Obenaus' ser-

vant, who had told her of the Duke's visit for that evening.

She seized her cousin's hand and kissed it passionately.

"Madam, what are you doing?" he exclaimed.

"There is no power that can hinder me from kissing the hand of my Emperor's son," she answered.

Without a word the Duke hurried upstairs to his tutor.

About a week later, when Prokesch entered his room, he found his friend sitting with a letter in his hand, which the young man could not doubt came from the same lady he had met in the passage, as it was Obenaus' servant who had delivered it.

"PRINCE,—I am addressing you to-day for the third time. Will you kindly let me have a few lines to say if you have received my letters, and whether you act as an Austrian archduke or as a French prince. In the former case, be kind enough to give others my letters. By bringing ruin upon me, you will probably better your own position, and the action may be to your honour! If, on the other hand, you will follow my advice, and act as a man, you will soon see how rapidly difficulties disappear in the face of a resolute will!

"You will find thousands of opportunities to

get into conversation with me, such as I cannot make for myself. You can trust nobody but yourself ; do not attempt it ! If I begged for permission to speak to you, my petition would not be granted, or a hundred witnesses might be present.

" You are as one dead for all that is French and for your family. In the name of the awful sufferings to which the sovereigns of Europe condemned your father, in the name of those lonely death agonies, by which he was made to atone for his pride, I beg you : Remember that you are his son, and that his last look rested on your likeness ! Think of all these horrors, and let kings suffer no further punishment than to see you on the throne of France ! Prince, make use of this favourable moment !

" Perhaps I have said too much. My fate is in your hands ! I add that, if you use my letters to my destruction, the recollection of your cowardice will be a greater sorrow than anything that can befall me.

" The messenger who brings this letter will wait for your reply, which, if you are a man of honour, you will not refuse.

" NAPOLEONE C. CAMARATA."

This letter made a deep impression upon the Duke, who wished to be considerate towards his cousin. But those to which she referred had never reached him, and as this last one, bearing

date 7th November, had been a whole week on the way, both he and Prokesch were of opinion that it had been opened by the police, and that it was a trap, just to try him.[1]

"I honour and share the wishes of the countess," said the Duke, "but I cannot see my way to her irrational confidence." He added that the letter gave him no assurance that there existed a party in France strong enough to support him.

As neither he nor his friend thought it advisable to enter into personal communication with her, they composed the following reply :—

"I have this morning received a letter bearing date 7th November, and I cannot understand the delay. Neither can I grasp the contents, nor the signature, though I gather the writer is a lady, and politeness exacts a reply from me. You must understand that I write neither as an Austrian archduke nor as a French prince—to use the expression of the letter! But my honour forces me to let you know, Madam, that I did not receive the two previous letters, of which you speak; and that the one

[1] In a conversation between Metternich and Prokesch-Osten, after young Napoleon's death, it appeared that the Duke and his friend were mistaken on this point. It is true that the minister was aware that the Countess Camarata wished to persuade the Duke to flee, but he had no knowledge that she had put herself into communication with him.

to which this is a reply, will at once be burnt, and the contents, if I have rightly understood them, will be for ever buried in my own memory.

"Although I am touched and grateful for your feelings towards me, I yet beg you not to address me again.

"DUKE OF REICHSTADT.

"VIENNA, *25th November.*"

On the despatch of his letter, the Duke explained the affair to Dietrichstein, who at once sent a messenger to his eldest brother, Prince Franz Dietrichstein, to inquire his opinion. He was one of the most gifted Austrian statesmen of the period, and an absolutely reliable man.

He knew France thoroughly, after a long residence in the country, and firmly believed that the time would become ripe for Napoleon II. in due course, not yet; but on all points connected with him, he and Prokesch-Osten were staunch allies.

The veteran statesman used to say to young Napoleon:

"Your spring comforts me in my winter."

The brothers Dietrichstein were firmly convinced that the Minister of Police had a hand in the matter. Prince Franz advised that no notice should be taken of messages from members of the Napoleon family, with the exception of any that might come from Joseph or Lucien.

He was not quite pleased that the Duke had replied to Camarata's letter.

"When I was your age I should have done the same thing," he said. "But now I should have read it carefully and noted the contents. Then I should have burnt it without a word to a soul!"

By request of his friend, Prokesch called upon the Countess, and represented to her that her thoughtless act had probably aroused the suspicion of the police, in consequence of which unpleasant restraint might arise for her cousin. He spoke in the warmest terms of his character and personality, his wishes and hopes for the future; also of his devotion to his father and of the zeal with which he studied every little detail that was published concerning him.

The Countess was surprised and pleased with all she heard, and sent him hearty greetings, when the pair separated, with a friendly shake of the hand.

The Countess Camarata left for Prague in December, where the report was current that the Duke of Reichstadt was to join her—but he never came.

When she could foresee no chance of meeting him, and felt that all her efforts were tending to no result, she returned to Italy, thoroughly disappointed.

## CHAPTER XVII

The Ball at the British Embassy—Marshal Marmont—The Duke of Age—Fresh Characters

In July 1830, Napoleon's son was appointed an Austrian major, and a few months later he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, when he wrote thus to the Emperor:

"I cannot find words to express the pleasure and delight that this fresh proof of your fatherly tenderness and favour has awakened in me. Rest assured, dear honoured grandfather, that I will strive to be worthy of your kindness, and fulfil the expectations which you have a right to look for after the excellent education that I have received under your direction, and realising too the abilities that God has given me, which it should be my sacred duty to develop."

He was the object of the warmest interest, wherever he appeared, and whether he rode in the Prater, or headed his troops through the town, both young and old rushed to their windows, to catch a glimpse of him. It was common talk that Louis Philippe's kingdom was tottering, and that the Austrian Emperor would allow his daughter's son to enter the political lists.

On 25th January 1831, a grand ball was given

by the English ambassador, Lord Cowley, at which the Emperor and Empress, and other members of the Imperial family were present, and on which occasion Napoleon's son made his official appearance in the diplomatic world. All eyes that had turned towards the sovereigns were now diverted to the young prince, who appeared in white uniform, and wearing the Grand Cross of the Order of St Stephan.

There were two French marshals in the hall, both of whom had been war comrades of Napoleon—one Marshal Maison, who was Louis Philippe's ambassador. The other Marmont, whose treachery had helped to ruin the cause of young Napoleon, and who, after the death of Charles X., had taken refuge in the Austrian capital.

The Duke went up to Marmont, and both he and the old warrior were equally moved.

"Marshal Marmont," said the young man, holding out his hand, "you are one of my father's oldest brothers in arms!" Marmont replied with emotion that he felt it an honour and a pleasure to have the opportunity of meeting the former King of Rome.

They spoke of Napoleon's campaigns, and the Duke asked several questions, with a dignity that surprised even Prokesch-Osten, who was standing by him.

Marmont afterwards wrote:

"There is a most striking likeness between

father and son. The latter's eyes are smaller and darker than Napoleon's, but they have the same expression, fire and energy. His cheeks are like his father's, the lower part of his face and his chin, while his complexion is that of Napoleon in his youth, and he is much taller. He reminded me too of his mother and the house of Habsburg."

The French ambassador wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

"All are agreed in praising the young prince's character, and his attractive, amiable manners. He is very aristocratic-looking, with an intelligent expression, and resembles both parents, but more especially the Austrian Imperial family."

The success of the Duke of Reichstadt was the main topic in Vienna the day after the ball.

Dietrichstein was delighted that all spoke well of his pupil. But when Prokesch went to see his young friend he found him sad and moody; he was annoyed with his tutor, who had kept by his side, and constantly found fault with him, whispering: "You are not lively enough! You look too serious! Your carriage might be better!"

"Were *you* satisfied with me?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Prokesch cheerfully.

"What do you think of Dietrichstein's remarks?"

"Remember only that you are Napoleon's

son ! " answered Prokesch. " Your consciousness of this will teach you how to behave ! "

. . . . . .

During Marmont's stay in Vienna, he had thought much of Napoleon's son, and had long wished to make his acquaintance ; besides, his half-hour's interview with him at the ball had greatly attracted him to the young man.

When at St Helena, the Emperor had spoken leniently of the marshal, who had been one of his most capable leaders, therefore it was but natural that the former King of Rome should wish to become better acquainted with him. He longed to hear of his father from one who had known him in his youth, and to have news of France from one whose home it was. Besides, he wished Marmont to tell his countrymen how highly he honoured the memory of his father.

" Why do you not call upon the Duke of Reichstadt ? " asked Prokesch, when he met Marmont in society.

" Do you think I should be well received ? "

" I am quite sure of it," rejoined Prokesch, adding that his friend had said how much he would like to have him as a teacher of military history.

The following day, Marmont spoke to Metternich on the subject, and the minister told him that, as the Emperor wished his grandson to understand his father's life, he might see him as frequently as he chose.

"I name but one condition," he added: "you must tell him the unvarnished truth about Napoleon, and reveal the bad as well as the good!"[1]

A few days later, the Marshal went to see the Duke of Reichstadt, when an arrangement was made for him to spend some hours with him every Monday and Friday morning, during which he graphically unfolded the story of Napoleon.

"All the Duke's thoughts turn towards his father, whom he literally worships," Marmont writes in his Memoirs. "It is impossible to describe the devotion with which he listens to all that I can tell!"

He admired the young man's quick understanding and his thorough military knowledge.

Although the Duke, on his part, treated the Marshal in a friendly manner, he never overcame a certain lack of confidence in him. "He has attained a tragical renown," he said to Foresti; but to Prokesch: "Marmont likes to kill three flies at one blow—he tries to make Metternich believe that he is furthering his plans. At the same time, he hopes that Louis Philippe will soon require his alliance: and, finally, he hopes to make it appear that he is secretly my friend and protector, in the event of Fate leading me back

[1] Later on, Metternich told Gentz that his sole motive in bringing Marmont and the Duke together was the hope that by means of this fresh acquaintance he would be able to counteract the influence of Prokesch-Osten.

to France! If I should ascend the throne, in any case, I shall let him shift for himself!"

Three months passed by, and the Duke wished the history lessons to cease. He gave the Marshal his likeness, under which he had written a verse of Racine's "Phèdre"; with an alteration in the first line:

> "Arrivé près de moi par un zèle sincère,
> Tu me contais alors l'histoire de mon père.
> Tu sais combien mon âme, attentive à ta voix,
> S'échauffait au récit de ses nobles exploits."

Then came the time when he himself must take his part in public life, and on 4th June 1831 he was told that Dietrichstein would leave him, after being his tutor for sixteen years. Although he had been strict with him, he had always realised his trustworthiness and protection; he had learnt to rely on him, and it grieved him that they must part. He presented him with a large painting, representing his pupil seated at a table, on which were two books; one "Eternal Gratitude," the other "Napoleon's Life."

After the Duke's death, in a letter from Prokesch-Osten to Dietrichstein are the words: "He frequently assured me that we two are the only people whom he loved!"

Foresti and Obenaus left him quite quietly, but the latter expressed his views, as to his charge, in a letter to the Emperor:

"The Duke longs to distinguish himself. He

is hasty in his conclusions, he has unbiassed confidence in himself and his capabilities, while his imagination overcomes every difficulty. He believes that nothing is impossible, and he likes to comfort himself with dreams of victory! He eagerly longs for war, in the hope of thus carrying out his great projects. He possesses an extraordinary faculty for reading the thoughts of others, and then misleading them, apparently falling in with their views; but, as often as not, befooling them. . . . He is too highly gifted and too well educated for the monotonous life of a garrison to satisfy his intellectual longings; and far too ambitious to submit to common, humdrum ways."

Obenaus declares that he is worthy of inheriting his father's renown, and becoming an important member of the Imperial family. He maintains that those who lead his men must not merely be upright and capable, but eminent officers, well versed in all historical knowledge.

He continues:

"In addition, they must be well acquainted with the usages of polite society, not targets for sneers! They must combine firmness and energy with tact. But they must be very careful not to attempt to domineer over him. In short, it is important that the men about him should be worthy of their rank, and make him proud to have them in his service."

Whether the tutor's advice ever reached the Emperor, or not, he did not follow it. It was already settled, October 1830, that General Count Hartmann should take the post held by Dietrichstein, and that Captain Baron Moll and Captain Standeiski should become his adjutants. Report had announced that he was to go to Prague, on his coming of age, the thought of which was delightful to the young man. But many were against the plan; and the Emperor the more willingly agreed with them because he himself was aware, from the political point of view, that it would be a risk to allow him to live in a small town, from which it would be easier to escape into Italy, or even France.

It was a bitter disappointment to him to be compelled to remain in Vienna, to be watched by the Argus eyes of the court.

" I must get free," he repeated again and again to Prokesch. " I must get out into the world. People must see me ! "

It was his great wish that Frenchmen should make his acquaintance, and that the scandalous reports that were current around him should be silenced.

The apparent liberty he was to enjoy when he came of age, was very far from satisfying his expectations.

In the written regulations prepared for Hartmann, when he entered the service of the prince, among others we read :

"In consequence of the singular position occupied by the Duke, the Emperor's grandchild will always prove a more or less desirable object for the plots of adventurers. It is one of your duties to keep these dangers at bay; you must prove yourself his guardian and his counsellor at the same time. Your attention must be constantly on the alert as to all who are about him; especially if they are foreigners, you must keep an extra close watch! Not a creature to be allowed admission to him unless you know him well!"

The Duke never became intimate with this fresh attendant—he preferred Baron Moll. Captain Standeiski was looked upon in the outer world as Metternich's spy. It is quite certain that Hartmann was most unsuited for his post; he was naturally dry and tedious; the prince found him shallow and repulsive, and did not scruple to make fun of him.

He missed Dietrichstein, and was greatly annoyed when his earnest request that Prokesch-Osten might be chosen to succeed him was rejected; and he remarked to his friend in despair:

"What horrible folk they have chosen to be about me!"

## CHAPTER XVIII

Marie Louise in Parma—Death of Count Neipperg—Mother and Son—The Duke of Reichstadt as an Officer

We have seen that Marie Louise had severed all connection with her former life in France long before she became the widow of Napoleon. In her own capital she was not unpopular, but looked upon as good-natured and sociable; though, outside Parma and Austria, her behaviour towards the prisoner of St Helena had deprived her of all sympathy and esteem. Even his enemies had found it hard to forgive the former Empress that she had so completely ignored him.

And when she was beyond her little dukedom, she came in for many unpleasant experiences. Once, on her way to Bologna, a crowd had collected by the roadside to insult her.

"Where is your husband?" they shouted, as she drove by. "Where is he, you hussy?"

Then they unharnessed the horses, leading them away, and screaming coarse words as they went, while she had to sit alone, until her coachman had procured other horses, thinking far other thoughts than those she indulged in when seated on the throne of France.

Her army was in a deplorable condition.

"You used to have finer soldiers than these,

Madame," said Chateaubriand, who had obtained an audience of the duchess.

" I never think of all that now," she replied. Her second husband had been an invalid for some time, and died on 22nd February 1829, when Marie Louise wrote to her father that she had lost " the best husband, the most steadfast friend, and all her earthly joy."

But, in spite of her apparent strong love for him, she went to the theatre every night, immediately after his death.

No clues are to be found which explain how far the Duke of Reichstadt was cognisant of his mother's connection with Neipperg, although it is hardly likely that the men who were about him kept it from him—neither is it improbable, with his sharp observation and imagination, that he knew all about it, but said nothing.

He was on pleasant terms with the Count, and his sons by a former marriage, who lived in Vienna, frequently went to see him. Their father was interested in his education, and the Duke wrote warmly and openly to him.[1]

We gather from this interchange of letters that the Count frequently wrote to him about

[1] On 16th December 1826, the youth of sixteen wrote thus to him: " I envy you, more than I can say, your good luck in being in my mother's society, and that you were able to offer your congratulations to her in person, on the 12th, while I had to content myself with writing to her for her birthday."

Napoleon's superiority as a general, and that it was he who first encouraged him to study his father's career. When the boy was about fourteen he wrote to Neipperg: "I have the strongest reasons for wishing to know French thoroughly, and to master all its difficult points. For the moment, it is the most important of my studies, for it was the language that my father used as commander in all the battles which made his name famous."

It was thought in many circles that Marie Louise would abdicate her little throne, and return to Austria, on the death of Neipperg. But it was by no means her thought to relinquish the first rank in Parma, for the second or third in Vienna.

Although in other respects she had forgotten the past, she still clung to her privilege of being styled "Empress" or "Majesty."

She was keen on gaining the friendship of the Bourbons, and six weeks after the death of Neipperg she received in ceremony Baron de Vitrolles, the new minister of Charles X., who had contributed to her downfall; for in 1814 it was he who encouraged the Allies to advance direct on Paris, and proclaim the return of the Bourbons. No resentment on her part was to be seen, and no lady of the French nobility could have welcomed him in a more flattering manner.

The poet Lamartine was Secretary to the Legation to Parma, and wrote:

" Yesterday I had the honour of dining with the Archduchess, who received me with the greatest friendliness. Apparently, she is happier in this little state than in any former period of her life ; and she is far more entertaining and approachable in Parma, than she was in Paris. The Empress and Marie Louise are two distinct individuals."

The Duke of Reichstadt was fond of his mother, and showed himself respectful and thoughtful towards her, to the very last. But he had neither comfort nor help from her, and he knew how unpleasant the recollection of Napoleon was to her and her court.

" If Josephine had been my mother, my father would never have seen St Helena, and I should never have languished in Vienna," he said to Prokesch. " My mother is good, but she is weak, not the woman that my father deserved."

Then he suddenly covered his face with his hands, as if vexed with himself for having said so much.

And Prokesch was troubled too, less on account of his words than because of the heart-rending tone in which he had spoken.

" The woman whom your father deserved is not to be found," he replied. " But he chose this one, and she is your mother ! "

With the exception of this occasion, the subject was never referred to between the friends.

Italy, which for hundreds of years had been cut up into small states, was longing for unity and freedom. Disturbances began in 1831, when two members of the house of Bonaparte, sons of Louis of Holland and Hortense, fought among the Italian revolutionaries. Parma joined in, and Marie Louise had to take refuge in the fortified town of Piacenza.

Her son would have hastened to her assistance, and both Dietrichstein and Prokesch agreed with him that it was his duty to do so; but when he asked the Emperor's permission it was promptly refused, on the advice of Metternich, and while the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the mother, her son was forbidden to accompany them.

He wrote her a long, affectionate letter, expressing his grief and disappointment that he was unable to stand by her in the hour of danger. He could not grasp why he was forbidden to support her, and went to his grandfather a second time, begging with tears to be allowed to go.

Francis was touched, but remained firm, and explained to his grandson that his appearance on the scene of action in Italy, might give rise to far graver complications than a revolt in Parma, as his father had been king in Italy, and many of the revolutionaries wished his son could succeed him.

While the old Emperor was explaining these

points, he remarked at the same time on the instability of Louis Philippe's situation, adding: "What a pity it is you are not older."

Prokesch had never seen his friend so agitated as on his return from this visit. He blamed his feverish emotion, begged him to strive for self-control, and take up his studies with increased seriousness.

"Time is very short," answered the Duke, "and must not be lost in further preparations. Is not the moment come in which I should act?"

He envied Alexander the Great, who had won his laurels before his nineteenth year, and, like Cæsar, he would rather be first in a small town, than second in a great city. He disliked the autumnal return to the Hofburg, after summer in Schönbrunn, and the narrow streets of the capital, with their high houses, oppressed him.

In order to avoid the escort he was compelled to have, he would frequently leave the theatre before the conclusion of a piece, even when the sovereigns were present and looking at him disapprovingly.

As soon as he was of age, he at last entered into active military service, when all who came into personal contact with him were astonished at his remarkable abilities.

He became Lieutenant-Colonel in the Prince of Vasa's Regiment, when he obtained the following testimonial :—

"The Duke is enthusiastic and highly intelligent, with agreeable, courteous manners. He is strict and just with his men. He shows eager, praiseworthy zeal for perfect development in every branch of the service. He commands and leads his battalion skilfully and easily. He is an exceptionally rapid and clever horseman."

Another of his superiors remarked:

"As an officer, this prince possesses valuable gifts and knowledge, with qualities that point to great results."

The young man threw himself with unbounded zeal into his military duties, and seemed to be never absent from barracks, or drill. Like his father, he was in touch with the meanest soldier; and, too, like him, exercised an astonishing influence over his men. As he rode by, his mere personality was so strong that the immovable, silent soldiers could not refrain from shouting "hurrah."

He thought of his father's honour, but never lost sight of his sorrows, and dreamt of calling his father's veterans to his side, discarding the Austrian uniform for ever. He would make his entry into Paris as a French general, and there was certainly hardly a day in which he did not say to himself: "I will go up that very staircase at the Tuileries, to which I clung so desperately when they brought me away. Beloved fatherland, I *will* see you again!"

But the oppression under which he lived

Duc de Reichstadt

militated against all plans for the future, and he had to curb his seething ambition.

He once said to a French officer, De la Rue, who made his acquaintance in Vienna :

" In Russia, if they wish to disgrace or punish a general, he is made a common soldier. If a prince is to be honoured in France, they create him a grenadier. Beloved country ! "

Just before the return of De la Rue to Paris, he received a note from the Duke of Reichstadt containing these words :

" When you see the Colonne Vendôme, greet it respectfully from me ! "

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Duke of Reichstadt and the Fair Sex

HERMAN ROLLETT, son of a doctor in Baden, near Vienna, and one of the few survivors who were personally acquainted with the Duke of Reichstadt, published his recollections but a few years ago.

He tells us that in the summer of 1830 the former Empress of the French was residing in the Flora Temple at Baden, while her son was just opposite, in the so-called Greek Temple. "Every morning, and frequently in the afternoon, I used to see the youth ride through the streets, and on into Helen's Dale, followed by a single groom."

By the wish of Marie Louise, the doctor gave the Duke a collection of butterflies.

"This direct intercourse with Napoleon's son," Rollett continues, "has impressed his manner and personality indelibly on my mind. One cannot picture a more attractive appearance than that of young Napoleon. His noble, serious, and somewhat sad countenance recalls the features of both parents, but it is too thoughtful. His manner was modest and retiring, but distinctly amiable; his voice very agreeable—not high in general conversation."

Baroness Sturmfeder, governess to the Emperor Francis Joseph, whose memoirs have recently been published, likewise recalls him as bright and witty. "Although he was very bashful, his whole being showed courage and activity," she remarks. "A man to note in a crowd, irrespective of rank."

Most of the authors who have been interested in him, say that he was fond of the society of women, who, on their part, were attracted by his good looks. Even in recent times, several people have passed themselves as the children of the Duke of Reichstadt, and maintain that he was secretly married.

Reports were current in Germany that Metternich encouraged him in a fast life, but Prokesch crushed these libels in the strongest language; and in fact it is not apparent that his younger friend had any secrets from him, but talked to him of the women whom he had met, though even the most charming and beautiful, never captivated him for long. The Emperor told him to follow a pure, moral life, reminding him of the havoc wrought by the libertine lives of so many men of the house of Habsburg.

The rumour that there was a liaison between Napoleon's son and the celebrated ballet dancer, Fanny Elsler, was accepted in Vienna at the time, and still gains some credence.

But she herself declared most positively that

she had only once spoken to the Duke, and had never had the smallest intercourse with him. She insisted on this statement, many years later, to the Emperor Napoleon III.

On the contrary, Porkesch-Osten was daily in her company, for, by her charm and touching devotion, she had quite captivated his elderly friend Gentz. These two had a common study in her house, which they called " Portici," and which Fanny kept supplied with flowers. She brought them their evening coffee ; they read aloud to her, and the three had a cheerful time together.

If the Duke wished to send a message to his friend, it was here that the servant brought the note ; and, as he entered the ballet-dancer's house most days, scandal did not fail to have her say.

In the winter of 1831, the Duke made the acquaintance of a pretty young artist, Madame Peche, at the Court theatre, to whom he frequently sent flowers. But it happened one day when he went to see her, with young Count Neipperg, that she received him in such a confident manner, apparently sure of his visit, that it thoroughly annoyed him, and he ceased to show her any attention.

Among the many at Court who were in love with him was a Polish lady of high birth, who hoped that he would prove the deliverer of his unhappy country. She thus speaks of her

feelings in a glowing letter to Count Dietrichstein.

"Nature has stamped this young man with the seal of genius. He possesses intelligence, depth, refinement, prudence, a noble heart and attractiveness; his qualities are more than needful to equip a hero of romance. He is an eagle, brought up in a poultry-yard! And they understand nothing about eagles in this country. His noble nature will never give in. He may not always live in a cage, but there is no man on earth capable of clipping his wings!"

The Duke never heard anything about this letter, and had not the faintest knowledge of the beautiful lady's devotion to him.

During this same year, he became intimate with Count Moritz Esterhazy, a talented, young diplomatist, whose society enlivened him; and about the same time he made the acquaintance of a beautiful woman, Countess Naudine Caroly, *née* Princess Kaunitz.

Esterhazy was his confidant in this affair, which went no further than ballroom courtesies, and strenuous efforts to meet her elsewhere.

One winter evening, in the beginning of 1831, he and Esterhazy were at a *bal masqué* together; and then, still wearing their masks, the two went to the house of the Countess, who was holding a reception, and to whom they made themselves known. But, although they danced

till daylight, not one of the guests ever knew the name or condition of the strangers.

When Prokesch appeared the next day, the Duke told him all about the little adventure, adding that he could not resist the temptation to try if he could possibly hoodwink, for a whole night, the spies who were always so keenly on the alert. The visit to the Countess had given him confidence that even under more serious conditions he would still be able to make his escape.

Esterhazy fostered his liking for Countess Caroly, but Prokesch persuaded him to dismiss her from his thoughts. She was undoubtedly beautiful, and she loved the Duke, but she was superficial and flighty, and Prokesch was afraid lest marriage with this spoilt woman of the world would have a baneful influence over him, and injure his future prospects in France.

As soon as Metternich discovered that Esterhazy had attached himself to Napoleon's son, he sent him away to the embassy at Naples, and Dietrichstein forbade his pupil to write to him, in spite of which the young men contrived to exchange letters, which the Austrian spies intercepted ; and, on one being handed to Dietrichstein, in which Esterhazy called the tutor "an old crone," it became clear to the Duke himself that it was advisable to cease writing.

On 2nd November 1831 he wrote thus to Prokesch :

"Before we separated last year, I told you of my increasing friendliness towards Moritz Esterhazy, and my attachment to a lady who had attracted me by her goodness of heart and original character. The feeling was mutual. Moritz Esterhazy was the go-between in this purely platonic incident. I could not carry on the intercourse but in the darkness of night, and by underhand means. The numerous difficulties and many waiting hours which this harmless attachment demanded, gave rise to a vigorous correspondence between my friend and myself. It lasted until he left for Naples—from February till May. After that date, I never crossed the lady's threshold, where I had always felt myself so well at ease. I had promised to report progress to my friend, and he regularly received French letters from me, for which he was provided with a secret key.

"Those that came from Naples were sent to a shop, addressed to the deceased owner. The day before I entered the army, Dietrichstein searched my writing-table, and told me to open a drawer that was locked. In it were Esterhazy's letters.

"When he had read the beginning of one of them, in which we called the lady in question 'Le Chinois,' he guessed what they were all about, became furious as usual, and attacked me.

"'A correspondence about some love affair,' he exclaimed.

" I answered, with complete indifference :

" ' Yes, you can look with whom.'

" ' You write to her ? '

" ' No ! '

" ' But through an intermediary whom I know ! '

" He had instantly guessed that this was Esterhazy.

" ' Calm yourself ! ' I begged, for we were not alone just then, and all eyes were upon us. ' Go down now. You shall have them all.'

" The good man was satisfied with this promise, and an hour later they were all burnt. . . ."

" The Duke was too much mixed up with history to dare to meddle seriously with romance," says Prokesch, in his records. He cautioned his young friend that too many social amusements might entice him from his duties, and possibly injure him in the future.

" Every man whose aim is to act a large part worthily must above all things learn to control himself ! "

## CHAPTER XX

### The Duke of Reichstadt and the Imperial Family

THE DUKE OF REICHSTADT was living his life too completely in the past, with his thoughts dwelling on his father and his father's fate, for it to be possible for him to be quite at home in the Hofburg. Although he was in the midst of his Austrian relations, there were few of them with whom he was intimate ; and those who ought to have stood by him were really the least aware that behind his formal behaviour, there was hidden a loving nature with ever-unsatisfied longings.

The life at court was monotonous, and intercourse between different members of the family cold and stiff, so that the romantic Frenchman found no niche for himself among these thick-lipped Habsburgs, while the numerous uncles and cousins, entrenched behind the antique customs of the Hofburg, had no sympathy with the son of Napoleon.

He looked like a member of some finer and nobler race, in the company of his mother's brothers and sisters, like a choice exotic transplanted into hard and barren soil, and he himself was perfectly well aware that it was evident he was different from his surroundings.

Life in Austria was humiliating to him ; most

of the archdukes were dull, and narrow in their views, and he often repeated with bitterness to his friend Prokesch the stupid, inane conversation heard at the Imperial table. The Emperor was fond of his grandson, who, on his part, was grateful to him for granting his wish as to the army. But the old man was too much occupied with himself to think seriously of others, and the young man was well aware that it would have been imprudent on his part to overstep the bounds of ceremonious respect.

Francis I. was singularly suspicious, and tried to carry out all details personally, so that documents by the thousand were always accumulating, waiting for his signature. Metternich, who wished to remain at the helm, took good care not to disturb him in his leisurely ways.

The Duke of Reichstadt looked upon the Empress Carolina Augusta as a clever, calculating woman, whose main object was to prolong the life of her old husband. She rarely left him, and strove to save him from mental exertion, as far as possible.

The New Year festivities were generally combined with those of her own " name day," so that a drive in the Prater, a visit to the theatre, or a walk on the city ramparts, became the only variations in the monotonous life of the Hofburg.

A report became current a few months before the death of the Duke of Reichstadt that he was engaged to the daughter of the Archduke Charles

of Austria, but it was not generally accepted There was no strong sympathy, either between him and the young archduchess, or between him and her father, although it was still firmly accepted in France that the old general was favourable to the Emperor's son.

The Archduke John was more attached to him, but they rarely met. He had married a post-master's daughter from Meran, and lived in Gratz, where he occupied himself with scientific interests. He was liberal-minded, and beloved by the people, but he was in disgrace with the Emperor. The young Duke thought highly of him, and loudly praised his talents and open-heartedness.

The majority of the younger members of the Imperial family, even after he was grown up, had not ceased to tease and mortify him.

They envied his popularity, and maintained that he was striving to make an impression, especially with ladies ; that he expressed new opinions simply in order to court attention, and they let no opportunity slip to discredit him with the Emperor.

Napoleon's son cared little for what the archdukes said or did ; but, although he despised them, there were moments when he longed to shock them. The Emperor insisted on his strictly adhering to the course of conduct prescribed for him ; but, on one occasion, soon after his coming of age, he gave a party to

some comrades, when all gradually forgot the moderation of the Court.

The archdukes told his aged grandfather, who did away with the youth's private rooms, and forced him to take all his meals with the tedious party at the Emperor's table.

The Crown Prince Ferdinand, who bore the title of "King of Hungary," was incapable and sickly; his education had been neglected, and he was not liked—but the young Duke was always ready to stand up for him.

Ferdinand became Emperor of Austria on the death of his father in 1836. During the disturbance of 1848 he abdicated in favour of the present emperor, Francis Joseph, the eldest son of his brother, Francis Charles, and the Archduchess Sophia.

Francis Charles was only nine years older than the Duke of Reichstadt; but, although he appeared to be his friend, he was false and disagreeable, and the two were always jealous of each other. The archduke had married Sophia, daughter of Maximilian of Bavaria, who for many years was an ally of Napoleon.

She was a great beauty, gifted and intelligent, only nineteen when she first came to Vienna, and soon felt something of a mother's kindness towards the neglected, lonely child, just thirteen.[1]

[1] In Clara Tschudi's "Empress Elisabeth," translated by E. M. Cope, we have a description of the archduchess in her advanced years, at Vienna.

As years went by, a bond of true devotion had formed between her and the young Duke, whom Sophia called her "dear, kind old man"; he said "Mother" to her, and from the admired child, became her reliable friend.

He went frequently to see her, sitting an hour or more with her and her little son, the present Emperor (1912).

She too was oppressed by the stiffness and dullness of the court around her, and had lost all her illusions as to the Austrian capital.

"I love you," the Duke once wrote to her, "because you were at once good and gentle to me. You said to yourself: 'See, he is unhappy; and there is not much gladness in store for him.' Yes, my devotion originally sprang from my gratitude to you. . . . You must never laugh at my jealousy!"

## CHAPTER XXI

France expects her Young Emperor—Metternich—Letter from the Duke to Prokesch-Osten

ENTHUSIASM for the memory of Napoleon was not less keen under Louis Philippe's rule than it had been under the Bourbons.

All the theatres played pieces from the Imperial days, martial pictures and likenesses of the Emperor and the King of Rome were exposed in all the shop windows, while, outside the Tuileries, barrel-organs played a melancholy waltz, said to be composed by the prisoner at Schönbrunn.

No one had forgotten that the Emperor's last thoughts had rested on his son :

> " Sois béni, pauvre enfant . . .
> Seul être qui pouvait distraire sa pensée
> Du trône du monde perdu ! "

Victor Hugo, who wrote these lines, published a letter to the youth of France, in which he called upon them to bring about brighter times for the unhappy son of Napoleon. He reminded them of conversations he was said to have had with his countrymen in Vienna, saying how dearly he loved the land of his birth.

The French deputy, Magnin, and faithful General Montholon, declared openly in the autumn of 1831 that, if Napoleon II. would

only come to France, he would find 100,000 of the National Guard ready to meet him, the French Government prepared to place the reins in his hands, and bring the era of Louis Philippe to an end.

The young prince waited eagerly for the call of the French nation, while holding violent discussions as to the state of things.

In the family circle he referred continually to the deposition of Charles X., to try to fathom the opinion of the Court with reference to his own chance.

But the call of France did not reach him; Metternich took good care that he never saw the mildest of the ardent petitions addressed to the Emperor and his chancellor.

"Metternich's ill-will towards the Duke of Reichstadt had increased, if it is possible that it could increase," Gentz said to Prokesch. "He is the blot on his system. The chancellor has not ill-used him, as some people say, but he has pushed him to one side, and kept his hand on him! Now, with his twenty years, the Duke stands forth, and Metternich hates him on account of all the evil which he himself has brought upon him.

"Then, the mere fact that he is obliged to look after him is sufficient cause to find him unbearable."

Metternich's flatterers were careful not to make the least allusion to the existence of Napoleon's

son ; they knew that it was irksome to him even to hear his name.

From 1815 to 1831 he spoke five times to him, and when events in France in 1830 and 1831 compelled him to further intercourse, he did it with an expression suggestive of a dose of the bitterest medicine.[1]

The Duke was afraid of his hatred ; and saw clearly that he was the great hindrance that stood between him and the throne of France.

Even Metternich's young and pretty wife bore a marked dislike to the Emperor's son. She called him a "bastard," and a "cunning actor," while she unceasingly fanned her husband's aversion towards him.

The behaviour of Prokesch-Osten towards Metternich, which had formerly been cordial, became less so, on account of his own friendship with Napoleon's son. The old statesman avoided the name of the Duke when they were together, and, although he was quite confidential on other

[1] After the death of the Duke of Reichstadt, Metternich called upon Montbel to write a memoir, making him believe that he himself had supplied the details. The Austrians laughed at Montbel's credulity, and Count Dietrichstein was so incensed at the lie, that he sharply rebuked Metternich in the public papers. His articles created a sensation, and acted as a blow on the chancellor, who hastened to reply to the tutor's censure, that there had never been any instruction, but simply a representation of existing facts, during conversations with the young man.

points, he concealed every item of the Bonapartist movements.

In November 1830, Prokesch applied for leave to go to Paris for a short time, but the chancellor emphatically refused the request. His spies, even in the Duke's house, repeated to him the plans and conversations of the friends, and he was fearful lest he should work for the cause of Napoleon II. in France.

Encouraged by Gentz, Prokesch renewed his petition, but with the same result.

"If Prokesch and the Duke vow to work together, they will bring the whole of Europe into confusion," he said.

Towards the end of March 1831, Prokesch received the announcement that it was the wish of the Emperor and Metternich that he should become Austria's representative in Bologna.

It was a heavy blow for the Duke when he had to bid good-bye to his friend on the 31st, and the previous day he had written to him:

"Since the commencement of our friendship this is the first time that we have been separated for any lengthy period! It is possible that eventful days will yet come, when we shall meet again! But perhaps the time will fly while I prepare myself for the heavy duties of the future; and again, perhaps the greatest sacrifice may be required of me to renounce the warmest wish of my youth, in the very moment when its fulfilment

shines brightly before me. In whatever position Fate may place me, rely upon me! Gratitude and devotion will knit me to you for all time. The patience with which you guided my military studies, your uprightness, your trust in me, and our mutual attachment, will always be pledges for these feelings.

"Friendship does not look upon the outer value of a gift, but on its inner worth! Accept this watch—the first I ever owned! It has been in constant use for six years, and I earnestly trust that it will mark you many happy hours and honoured moments, in the near future! Moreover, do not forget that you were the first to teach me to use my time profitably, and to seize the right minute!

"If I have grasped the object of your fresh appointment, it is not suited to your acquirements.

"But to an observer and judge of character, as you are, it will give a chance of studying the real connection between these revolutionary movements, and to gauge the strength of the people. It will take you to a land which has given us a glimpse of power and greatness not hitherto reached.

"I shall write to my mother very shortly about you, with all the warmth that you alone were able to rouse in, your sincere friend,

"Fr. von Reichstadt."

## CHAPTER XXII

### Illness—The Duke longs to flee to France

ALTHOUGH the King of Rome had apparently been a strong, healthy child, there were prophets in 1814 who, even then, foretold that he would never become old. He had not only the blood of the Bonapartes and Ramolinos, with that of the Habsburg Lorrainers in his veins, but he was likewise a descendant of the Neapolitan Bourbons, through whom he was threatened with phthisis, cancer or insanity.

The heir whom Napoleon had so eagerly desired was doomed before his birth. At the time that his adherents were in vain beseeching Metternich to give him up to France, he had long borne traces of the malady that caused his death. His teeth were bad, which was the more remarkable that all the Napoleon family had such excellent teeth, strong and well formed. From his fourteenth year his fingers were frequently yellow and withered ; his chest was too narrow, and his limbs were extremely frail.

In the summer of 1827 he was taken suddenly ill at the Emperor's table, and the court physician, Staudenheim, who was summoned, said that he was scrofulous, and decidedly delicate. He ordered swimming exercise, which was useful

to him; but as the weather got colder it had to be given up, on account of sore throat. Still, through the doctor's foresight, his health had improved, though he was not allowed to be out in either rain or wind, during the winter. He was forbidden to dance or to fence, but allowed plenty of riding and swimming during the summer.

The young man, who looked upon this effeminate care as incompatible with his future career, opposed all these precautionary measures, and both doctor and tutor became alarmed by his obstinacy.

"His mind is far more developed than his body, and the alertness of the former arrests the development of the latter," wrote Count Dietrichstein.

Although he was comparatively well in 1829, he was always under medical supervision.

Staudenheim died in 1830, and Malfatti became his successor. His agreeable manner had made him the fashionable doctor of Vienna. He was jocular, easy-going, and always ready with some bright, trivial remark.

He also declared the Duke to be consumptive, that his growth had been far too rapid, and that his liver was affected. One cause of his delicacy was found in a skin trouble on his neck and the upper part of the arm, which he looked upon as inherited from the father's side.[1]

He warned him, as his predecessor had done,

[1] Malfatti had attended the Duke's uncle, the ex-King of Holland, and his Aunt Bacciochi.

against over-fatigue, chills, excitement and unsuitable food.

Others now began to see that the Duke was ill. He became hoarse on the least exposure, and very easily tired.

"I am in great anxiety because the prince looks so ill, and because he laughs at all my well-intentioned warnings," wrote Dietrichstein to Obenaus.

Riding was one of his few pleasures, and he would spend hours out of doors, feeling well, as he rode rapidly over the moors. But after sitting thus four or five hours on horseback, he would often go direct to the theatre, bathed in perspiration. He was overworking the horses too, so he was quietly forbidden to ride as much as he wished.

His military superiors do not seem to have realised that his health could suffer from heavy work; at any rate they were misled by his zeal and energy.

"He has good health, and can stand any amount of fatigue," wrote the Prince of Vasa. But those who knew him more intimately, began to suspect that his ardent zeal was but a fire that would soon burn itself out.

The devotion of his men urged him to fresh efforts, though his voice often failed him on the parade ground, but he still scorned all warnings to spare himself.

He was growing fast, eating next to nothing, sleeping barely four hours, in spite of his real need

for rest. He became painfully thin, and his skin, formerly so fair, became ashy-grey.

He had one reply as to the question how he felt: "I am perfectly well."

But if the doctor went to see him in barracks he found him lying on a bed, absolutely exhausted.

It was Malfatti's wish that he should give up his military duties; but, on the one hand, the young man would on no account leave his men, on the other, he was ashamed of his own weakness.

"I am mad with this wretched body, which will not obey the will of my soul," he said.

"You have a soul of iron, but a body of crystal," answered Malfatti.

At one time Hartmann took the part of the Duke, and maintained that loss of voice is of frequent occurrence with commanding officers.

But when he was prostrated by a malignant, feverish chill, in the height of summer, the general began to see there was something really amiss.

At the close of a review on the ramparts at Vienna, Malfatti read a written account as to the health of the Duke, aloud, to the Emperor.

"You hear what Malfatti reports," said Francis to his grandson. "I command you to go at once to Schönbrunn, and attend to your health!"

The young man bowed in sign of obedience, but as he turned to the spot where the doctor was standing he said, with a furious look and a voice vibrating with anger:

" Then it is you who are sending me to prison."

The stay in Schönbrunn was beneficial to him, and he slept from seven to eight hours. Both colour and expression improved, the chest pains became less acute, and gradually left him. He was seen out driving when the weather was fine, or riding in moderation.

Malfatti was then residing at Hietzing, close to Schönbrunn.

" You are amiable and good," he said to the Duke, " and I am really attached to you, but, as a patient, I cannot bear you."

" And I am fond of the intelligent man, but I detest medical fads," was the reply.

Prokesch returned from Italy at the beginning of October, and took up his residence at Hietzing, where he at once received a long letter from his friend, and hastened to him. He found him thinner, but looking less ill than he had expected ; calmer, but less hopeful than formerly.

The day after this interview, the Duke wrote him a long letter, containing the following :—

" You cannot think how delighted I was to see you again, my dearest friend. I was overwhelmed with happiness, and am surprised at the wonderful influence you have over me. What crowds of thoughts jostled each other in my brain with reference to my own position —history, politics, science, and the security or instability of states. . . . There are innumerable points on which I long for the light of your

counsel, judgment and experienced knowledge. . . ."

He wrote him again, 9th October :

" Your long letter of yesterday morning gave me wonderful help towards striving for greater self-control, and submitting myself to the advice of others. . . .

" But, my friend, time is needed for the work you propose to me. And the innner voice, which should play a chief part in this task of the future, tells me that time will be wanting for my many different undertakings. If you can come to me at eleven-thirty, or in the evening at six, you would be the most delightful person in the world ! "

The Duke returned to the Hofburg in November.

" The two months' rest at Schönbrunn was as balsam to his shattered health," said Malfatti.

He resumed his military duties, and the hope of youth never left him, in spite of his bodily sufferings. But Prokesch, who constantly went to see him, soon found out that his strength was by no means in proportion to his power of will. On 28th November 1831 the Duke wrote to him : " On my return from one of our prettiest operas I found a card, which told me that I had had the visit of a friend whose intelligent conversation is infinitely dearer to me than the most harmonious music. If you come across this friend, I shall be extremely grateful if you

will assure him of my warm attachment, and beg him to send me a line, and say if he will sacrifice for my benefit a couple of hours in the afternoon of to-day, to-morrow or the following day."

Shortly after the Revolution in July, the Duke's adherents in the Netherlands had issued an engraving representing him holding a review of his Austrian battalion, with the following conversation between his grandfather and himself printed beneath the likeness :—

*Duke.*—" Sire, I wish I had thirty such battalions as this ! "

*Emperor Francis.*—" What would you do with them ? "

*Duke.*—" I would go to Paris and fetch my baptismal certificate."

*Emperor Francis.*—" The time has not yet come ! "

The Emperor expressed his disapproval of this likeness to the French ambassador, though he had not the heart to deprive his grandson of every spark of hope that he would return to France.

On 5th January 1831, Prokesch wrote the following in his diary :—

" I have spent a couple of hours with Reichstadt, who told me of a conversation he had had with the Emperor about his prospects.

" If the French nation wished to have you, and the Allies approved," Francis had said,

'I should have no objection to seeing you on the throne of France.'"

In some memoranda of Prokesch, December 1831, we find:

"The Duke relates that he said to the Emperor:

"'If my father were still living, I would work with body and soul to effect my return to France!'

"'You would be quite right,' rejoined the Emperor, 'and I would help you—perhaps not openly, but, at any rate, with money!'"

Metternich once spoke to the Duke as to the political situation, and was of opinion that the several cliques simply wished to use his name and person as a toy.

The young man proudly replied: "I should scantily fulfil the duties which the recollection of my father imposes upon me, if I allowed myself to act as a tool in these intrigues. Napoleon's son will never lower himself to play the part of an adventurer!"

Although nothing crushed his hopes, he would not be persuaded to over-haste. "The path must be quite clear in France before I set my foot there," are words that he frequently used to Prokesch, to whom he continually talked about his longing for his birthplace.

Even as late as 30th December 1831 the friends consulted which route it would be the most prudent to choose. If they could have

seen their way to flight, they would not have refrained from taking the bold step, even at this eleventh hour.

"We were ready," Prokesch relates. "But the future loomed before us like a trackless desert; and Metternich's watchfulness was too keen."

## CHAPTER XXIII

The Last Military Duty—He becomes worse—Farewell to Prokesch—The Holy Sacrament

THE beginning of the winter was dreary and cheerless, with an icy cold wind that blew the last withered leaves round the castle.

The Duke became sleepless, as before, and the short days, followed by long nights, caused great depression. He needed the warmth of spring, and rest. But, instead of giving himself more leisure, he begged to accompany the Emperor on his autumn hunting-parties. He had resumed his activity, and had thrown himself once again, with exaggerated zeal, into his military duties.

General Kutschera was inexperienced enough to remark that he was wanting in energy; and the expression wounded him so deeply that he determined to show that his will was stronger than his feeble body.

On 9th January 1832 Baroness Sturmfeder wrote thus in her diary:

"The weather was so damp it was impossible for us to go out. The Archduchess Sophia, little Francis Joseph and I stood over a quarter of an hour at the window, watching the Duke of Reichstadt, who was reviewing the guards. A

number of people had assembled in order to see him in the midst of his duties. He carries himself like his father, and wears his hat just as Napoleon did. As I am short-sighted, and could not distinguish his fine features, it seemed as though I saw the living father, just as he is represented in his picture. I mentioned this to the Archduchess, and she agreed with me, as she added : ' It is his warmest wish to resemble his father.'

" When he had at last finished, he threw himself lightly on to his horse, and rode away, followed by his adjutants and the jubilant shouts of little Francis Joseph, from behind the closed window."

A week later, in bitter weather, he was at the head of his battalion, assembling on the occasion of the funeral of General Siegenthal, when his voice suddenly failed him.

Herman Rollett relates :

" I was standing as a spectator, when he appeared, following the coffin at the head of his regiment. He was unable to utter a sound, and wept with sheer annoyance that he had to hand over his command to another."

Immediately after this he was attacked with ague and took to his bed, the illness increasing rapidly in severity. Without a regret, he refused the society invitations, of which he had been fond, even for a ball, 21st January, at the French Embassy, although Metternich had announced that he would be present.

"I have nothing to do with Louis Philippe's minister," he exclaimed bitterly.

He felt fearfully tired, and sometimes would lie for hours immovable on a sofa. But he would not allow a cold world to witness his sufferings, and hid himself from all, except his best friends.

Prokesch was as ever his counsellor and confidant. Each evening that he went to see him he found him crushed under a weight of gloomy thoughts, or pacing the floor in nervous agitation, that he was powerless to control.

He was in despair about his great weakness, and felt himself forsaken. His mother seemed to ignore his condition. The Archduke John lived some distance from him, and the old Emperor was absent from home. With the exception of the Archduchess Sophia, there was not one in the whole Court that cared for him; and the short perfunctory visits of other members of the family brought no comfort.

If he was obliged to show himself, his face always wore a quiet, impenetrable expression. But when he was alone with Prokesch, he wept that he could not become a great man, and that he would probably not live long.

"My cradle and my coffin will stand very close to each other," he used to say.

As a member of the Austrian Imperial family, be had been brought up in the orthodox Catholic faith. But the hypocrisy in the lives of many

of his connections at Court, which harmonised so little with the spirit of religion, had made him indifferent as to outward forms. He was firmly opposed to the practice of frequent confession, and, in fact, only fulfilled his religious duties under protest.

On one occasion, when his valet allowed his confessor to enter the room without being announced, he exclaimed testily :

" I will not permit a priest to be on a confidential footing with me."

Prokesch spent the last New Year's Eve with him, when they talked of religion. The Duke had underlined several passages in the " Memoirs of Las Cases " which touch on Napoleon's opinions, when in St Helena.

The young man admitted to his friend that religion was of greater comfort to him now than formerly, and that he, like his father, considered it the foundation of every well-ordered state, and an invaluable support and comfort for the private individual.

Under his likeness by Isabey he had written the following lines :—

" Heureux qui met en Dieu toute son espérance !
On a toujours besoin d'implorer sa bonté.
Il nous consolera dans les jours de souffrance,
Si nous l'avons servi dans la prospérité."

" The fear of God is our strong staff as we wander through the night of life," he said to Prokesch.

At the close of this long talk he showed him a book of devotions that the Imperial couple had given him, on the first page of which his grandfather had written :

" God give thee light and strength in every important act of thy life and in every struggle."

During his illness he worked eagerly to obtain the promotion of Prokesch to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and in January he was able to write to him :

" The task you confided to me is done. Yesterday Kutschera, the Master-General of the Ordnance, who knows you, spoke in your praise, and promised to lay the proposal before the Emperor to-day. Business, with which he is overwhelmed, has so far prevented him from doing so. I trust that I may shortly welcome you as my comrade ! . . . Count Dietrichstein has just left me. He told me that people generally have no high opinion of me, and that I am a Tower of Babel. Which way shall I turn to learn the truth ? To you ! Let me have a few lines just to reassure me that I am not utterly lost. If you can do it, without betraying me, find out from Count Dietrichstein what it is that is current about me. It would be a fresh proof of your friendship." [1]

[1] On the margin of the Duke's letter is the following remark by Prokesch :—" Tower of Babel ! The name might be applied with far more accuracy to Count Moritz himself ! Poor Duke ! "

Although Metternich was perfectly well aware of the serious condition of the Duke, he did not refrain from causing him grief and disappointment.

Towards the close of February, Prokesch was sent to Italy for the second time. It was a trying good-bye for them both, though neither of them foresaw that this was their last meeting. As they separated, the Duke gave his friend his own sword, on which he had had the name of Prokesch engraved.

In spite of the disquieting progress made by his malady, the Duke continued careless about his health, and relapses were of frequent occurrence. On a bitterly cold day in spring, he went for an exhausting ride, and, without resting, he drove the same evening in an open carriage to a place of amusement, outside Vienna, where he remained sitting long after the sun had set. On the return drive the vehicle came to pieces, and he had to walk home ; but strength failed him, and he fainted on the way.

His doctor was in despair that he had not heeded his advice, and said : " It looks as if the young man's energy were driving him to suicide. All precautions are of no avail against his fate, which hurries him along."

At last his health began to excite serious uneasiness at court. A consultation was held by Malfatti and three other physicians, who all considered the case critical.

Malfatti wished to send him to the south of Italy, and the Duke was cheered by the prospect, though feeling certain that Metternich would oppose the plan. The chancellor, however, perfectly convinced that he could get no farther than Schönbrunn, sent a message to the effect he could go to any land he chose—except France.

The park and garden at Schönbrunn were looking their very best, with roses in bloom, and, as the rooms he usually occupied were not ready, the Archduchess Sophia gave up her own apartments, at the other end of the castle, the very suite that Napoleon had used in 1809.

His grandfather thought to please his daughter's son, now sick unto death, by promoting him to the rank of Major; but the young man was far too weak to write to express his thanks.

Although the doctor had forbidden it, he drove in an open carriage from Schönbrunn to Laxenberg, where he remained talking to several officers. The exertion increased his suffering, and it was now, for the first time, that he complained of almost unbearable pain.

He had chosen for a pleasant resting-place an arbour, surrounded by high firs, a favourite spot of the Archduchess Sophia, where she often met him, and tried to disperse his gloomy thoughts.

But one day, as he was starting for the arbour, his feet absolutely could go no farther, and the doctor suggested he should use a sedan chair.

"A sedan chair!" exclaimed the Duke. "What an indignity for a soldier!"

"Marshal Saxe won several of his victories while sitting in a sedan chair," remarked the doctor.

The young man submitted, but forbade that any stranger should see him.

Marshal Maison asked to be allowed to pay his respects to him.

"Tell the Marshal that I am asleep," he said.

The court chaplain considered that he ought to receive the Holy Sacrament, but nobody dared to suggest it, lest he should think he was considered a doomed man.

At last the Archduchess Sophia undertook the difficult task. She was looking forward to her confinement, and told him that she should like to go to the altar to pray for her child, and she invited him to go with her, that at the same time they might pray for his recovery.

The service was held on 19th June. When a sick member of the Austrian Imperial family receives the Holy Sacrament, it is the custom for all the archdukes and archduchesses to be present.

The family had taken their places in one of the galleries of the great hall, where the altar had been placed, but the Duke could not see them.

Deep silence reigned as he entered, wearing his white uniform, looking pale and emaciated, while his relations and friends beamed with health and brightness. All present were deeply moved—it was a meeting of life and death !

Sophia supported him, as they slowly left the hall, as she had done when they were kneeling side by side.

A few days later the unfortunate Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, Sophia's second son, was born.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Death of the Emperor's Son

PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON, subsequently Napoleon III., wrote to Metternich, 28th May 1832, that the Republicans were preparing a decisive blow, by which to gain ascendancy in France. He maintained that the time had come to unfold the banner of the Duke of Reichstadt, to which influential men were prepared to hasten, but that the Duke must first give his written consent, to assure his adherents that he would not refuse the crown, if offered to him.

The Chancellor sent the letter to Louis Philippe, and wrote the same day as follows, to the Austrian ambassador in Paris :—

"I look upon the Duke as doomed. His malady is fully developed tuberculosis, one that spares no age, but surely kills a patient of twenty-one."

A short time before his death, Napoleon's son received the cradle which the Parisians had given to him, but which Louis XVIII. had neglected to send to him.

Metternich mockingly asked what he intended to do with it.

"It is the only memento of my history," he

replied, "and I am anxious that it should be taken care of."

The news of his illness had reached his uncle, the ex-King of Holland, who wrote him a long letter, to the care of the Austrian ambassador, begging him to see that it reached his nephew. But Metternich did not.

The son wrote thus to his mother, under great suffering :

"When I think of the future that may be in store for me, I am bound, for the sake of mankind, to do my very best to recover my health."

But mankind, even his own mother, had ignored him ! And he was longing with painful eagerness for the comfort of a friend, for a mother's care and tenderness. His best friend was far away, and could not write to him without special permission.

Hard-hearted Marie Louise failed to appear. On 7th June, she wrote to her minister that she had received disquieting accounts of her dearly loved son, and that she had arranged to go to Vienna for a short time.

In spite of this official notice, she quietly remained for weeks in Trieste, with her father.

The Duke's illness roused deep concern in Vienna, where nobody had thought that he would die so young. The elders recalled the child of France, who had smiled so prettily upon them from his carriage : the little boy with large eyes and long, fair curls.

The younger generation admired the accomplished horseman who galloped through the streets—" the handsome duke," as the Viennese called him, while each and all thought of the contrast between his father's career, which had been so rich in victory, and the short life of his son, begun in splendour, so speedily overcast.

Crowds went out to Schönbrunn to inquire after him, and with a faint hope of catching a glimpse of him. But the few who saw him sitting on the balcony at the castle found it hard to recognise him, as they wept over his altered appearance.

His mother's indifference caused quite a sensation, and Metternich became anxious lest the Viennese would never forgive her, if she were absent from her son's death-bed.

He told the Emperor that his daughter was sharply blamed, because she had not come to Schönbrunn, and that under any circumstances it was clear that she must show herself as quickly as possible. He did not disguise the fact that public opinion was excited against her, and Malfatti also wrote urgently that she must hasten.

At last she decided to travel.

The meeting with her son was heart-rending. The young man made an effort to rise and receive his mother, but he fell back in his chair, while his voice utterly failed him.

Marie Louise tried to master her outbursts of grief, but it was only for a moment she could restrain a sob, or stop the flow of her tears. She had too, feeling enough, to confess that she had never done her duty towards him.

A few days after her arrival, 30th June 1832, she wrote to the Emperor :

" DEARLY BELOVED PAPA,—I am living here, so to speak, from day to day, for my son is quickly a little better, and as quickly much worse, so the hours pass in sorrow and anxiety. Yesterday was fairly quiet ; he spoke a little only and consequently coughed less ; but towards evening he was in a high fever, slept only an hour or two, and coughed terribly. Malfatti considers his condition very critical, but still has hopes of the future, which I do not share. I commit all my sorrow to God; my weal and woe are in His hands, and He will guide me to my true welfare ! "

The Duke used either a sofa or the narrow camp-bed which was his father's, during his stay in Schönbrunn. He never murmured, either to his mother, or others, and General Hartmann, who had witnessed death on battlefields, remarked :

" I have never seen a soldier die more courageously than this young prince ! "

At last the Duke himself was convinced that death was at hand.

Dietrichstein went to see him, and told him that he should have to leave in a few days.

"I cannot be so very ill," said the Duke: "if Dietrichstein believed there was danger, he would not go."

His mother went to him three or four times a day, and even watched by him the last few nights. His adjutant, Baron Moll, showed him real devotion; he sat by his bed, read to him and tried to lull him to sleep. The sick man looked gratefully at him, showed he understood, and sometimes whispered with difficulty:

"You are having a bad time with me, Baron Moll." Some of those about him fancied that he still had a faint hope of recovery, but, in the most excruciating pain, he said:

"My birth and my death make up my story. There is just a large empty space between my cradle and my coffin!"

His voice was failing, but his eyes were bright and lively, and when he felt a slight respite from pain, he would listen with apparent pleasure to Baron Moll, who continued to cheer him with the prospect of a journey to Italy.

His death struggle began 21st July, when he clutched his hands in despair, then let them fall on to the bed, as he murmured:

"Only death can help me."

An unusually hot summer had prolonged his sufferings, but, as he lay in the throes of death, the sky became suddenly overcast, the rain came

down in torrents, and a hurricane howled round the castle.

Then, after a flash that lit up every corner of the room, followed an awful peal of thunder, and a heavy mass of something fell in the castle garden, which proved to be one of the Austrian eagles, over the chief entrance, struck by lightning.

The storm seemed to rouse the Duke back to life, and he inquired of his adjutant if his carriage was ready for the Italian journey.

Malfatti had been with him one evening, and had remarked on leaving that the Duke would live till the following day.

The mother was asleep, and the baron, who was already exhausted, had retired to an adjacent room to get a few hours' rest, leaving a valet alone with the dying man.

Shortly before four o'clock in the morning the man rushed in to the adjutant, exclaiming: "The Duke is dying."

Moll hastened to the room, and the two men raised him. His last words were a heart-rending cry for help:

"Mother! I'm sinking!"

He seized the adjutant's arm, and clung hard to it, then his eyes became fixed, and he fell back on his bed.

Moll went to call Marie Louise, and, on his return, the Duke was quite calm, and slightly conscious.

His mother appeared, trembling all over, and remained standing at the foot of the bed, when he warmly and intently fixed his eyes on her, nodding several times.

The Archduke Francis Charles, General Hartmann, Malfatti, and the ladies and gentlemen of the court of Marie Louise had hastened forward, together with a young priest, who had been waiting in the ante-room.[1]

All knelt while he administered the Holy Sacrament, before which he asked the sick man if he should read, or pray for him. The Duke answered the first question by a shake of the head; the second with an affirmative nod. He lay with folded hands, following the priest's every movement.

Between five and six o'clock he turned his head uneasily from side to side. Then the doctor leaned over him, and announced that the Duke of Reichstadt had breathed his last.

He died in the same room where the conqueror of Wagram had dreamed of his triumphs, and on the same day on which young Napoleon had received the news that his illustrious father was dead.

Marie Louise tried to rise, but fell, when Hartmann and her own attendants led the half-

[1] The Archduchess Sophia was ill at the time, and the death of the Duke of Reichstadt affected her so seriously that she lay for days between life and death.

fainting mother out of the room, where wax tapers were burning, in spite of the splendour of a lovely summer morning.[1]

[1] The above details of the last moments of the Duke of Reichstadt are taken from a letter written by Baron Moll to Count Dietrichstein, 6th August 1832.

## CHAPTER XXV

Letter from Moritz Esterhazy to Prokesch-Osten—Prokesch-Osten and Madame Letitia Bonaparte—Letter from Marie Louise to the Emperor Francis—Sympathy in Vienna—The Duke's Body taken from Schönbrunn to the Imperial Vault

A WEEK before the Duke's death Moritz Esterhazy wrote from Naples to Prokesch-Osten, who at that time was in Rome :

" You will have the opportunity of seeing once again the interesting young man, who is already near the close of his short career. . . . He must feel like an exile, as he leaves this life, and among his surroundings he will seek for one who understood him, to whom he can confide his last wishes. May it be granted to you to receive his last thoughts ! . . . I envy you ! *I* dare not hope to do so. . . . Unfortunate young martyr, inheriting nothing but death from such greatness ! But perhaps death is a blessing for him ! Why should we pity him ? His position gave little promise of happiness, and, among the possible events of the future, death often seemed to be the best for him. . . . His honour—irreproachable—would have been subjected to so many hard conditions that he could scarcely accept. His duties would have been so diverse, that they would soon have become conflicting,

and it would have been impossible to force them into harmony. . . . Renown not absolutely complete would have troubled him, mediocrity would have been a crime. But we cannot help feeling deep sorrow in our loss, before the world had learnt to know him, and also, that this bright light should be extinguished just when his sun should be rising! . . .

"I refrain from expressing the personal blank that is left in the loss of a friendship which chance had put in my path, and which I would have striven to deserve, as one of the greatest joys of my life.

"If not too late, recall to him the devotion which he knows I have always felt towards him. It cannot disturb even his last moments! Perhaps he feels more than ever the need of that perfect sympathy which was so ever-present with him. . . ."

Prokesch-Osten was not able to tell his friend of Esterhazy's feelings towards him, nor even to send to him his own last greetings, though his thoughts were with him in the hour of death. The previous day he visited the Emperor's mother in Rome.

The brilliancy of her son's career had never deceived her; her experience had simply taught her that such show and pomp could not last.

Napoleon's imprisonment, sickness and death had been the deepest of the stricken mother's many sorrows.

But still her grandson was living, and she felt a thrill of pleasure on the mere mention of his name, hoping against hope, that the day would come when he would be called to occupy his father's throne.

The report of his illness had only just reached her lonely home—his death would crush her last earthly hope, but when she heard that Prokesch was in Rome, she longed for him to come to see her.

He went, 21st July, at the same time as Charlotte, daughter of Lucien Bonaparte.

A dignified woman slowly rose as he entered; but she was blind and very lame; her voice was beautiful still, and she gave him a hearty welcome.

He talked to her of her grandson, and she listened with increasing agitation. Then, as he related some points, interesting to a mother, the stronger appeared the similarity between the characters of the two Napoleons.

Her desires for her son's son were summed up in the following words:—

"God grant that he will also act in accordance with his father's last wishes."

Prokesch, on the point of taking leave, kissed her hand, and Letitia detained him, laying her hand on his head; he guessed her intention, and knelt before Napoleon's mother. "As I cannot welcome him," she said, "I place his grandmother's blessing on your head. I must

soon leave this world, but my prayers, my wishes and my tears will follow him to my last hour. Give him what I confidently lay on you and commit to your heart!"

She embraced him, and leaned silently on his breast.

Prokesch used to say: "That was the most touching moment of my life."

As Letitia was in the act of sending him her blessing from Rome, her grandson was entering "the shadow of death."

It was not till a few days later, when Prokesch-Osten was in Bologna, that he heard of his friend's death.

"I felt as though the earth were giving way under my feet, when I received the news that he had passed away," he wrote. "If I live to be a hundred, I shall never cease to regret him."

To Baron Moll he wrote:

"Nobody will ever convince me that nothing further could have been done for the prince!"

It was a bitter grief to him that he had not been allowed to see him once again.

His old friend Gentz had passed away a few weeks previously, and he wrote in his diary:

"It is a painful thought that I was not with these two in their last hour—each needed the love of a friend! And to think that they both died without being able to confide in someone who thought with them! How willingly I

MADAME LETIZIA
1832

would have sat by them ; and they would have felt that I loved them." [1]

As soon as Marie Louise had returned to her own apartments she wrote to the Emperor :

" My poor son has just passed away, at ten minutes past five. God heard my humble prayer and gave him rest in sleep. I kiss your hand again and again, dearest father, for all the gracious kindness you have shown him, for which my heart will ever be full of thankfulness."

Then she remembered that her son had a grandmother living, to whom she wrote a long letter, to the effect that "my dear heartily loved son, Duke of Reichstadt, has succumbed to his long and serious sufferings." [2]

Half-an-hour after the Duke's decease, Metternich sent Baron Moll to Francis I. to inform him officially of his grandson's last moments.

Although the old Emperor had long been prepared for the news, he was painfully overcome, and shed tears as he talked to Moll.

[1] The Duke left to Prokesch the sword which his father had brought back from Egypt, two other swords and the books they had read together. In addition, two portraits, under one of which he had put : " This is my likeness ! May a glance at it, now and again, recall me to my faithful friend ! " Foresti was to arrange the Duke's papers, when all family letters were sent to Marie Louise.

[2] See Clara Tschudi's " Napoleon's Mother," translated by E. M. Cope.

"Death was a happy release from his sufferings," he said. "I cannot state if the event is a blessing or not, from a political standpoint, but, personally, I shall miss him."

"The Court received the news with grief, and sorrow reigns everywhere in Vienna," wrote General Hartmann.

Metternich and his clique looked upon his death as a relief, but many prominent men and women spoke with sympathy and understanding of the young man, and warmly lamented his sad fate.

Since the death of their noble Emperor Joseph, the Austrian nation had never shown such universal grief as on this occasion.

The crowds in the streets, and towards Schönbrunn, recalled great European events. The Duke's portraits were in such demand it was almost impossible to procure one. Simply masses of men passed by the coffin, in which the young prince lay on view in his white uniform, with Napoleon's sword by his side. A touch of noble resignation was on his face, which had become in death more and more like his father's.

"I did not think the prince had as many locks on his head as there have been people to beg for one in his memory! Before we had time to turn round, a great number of his smaller articles in daily use had disappeared for ever. His walking-stick, his riding-whip—all

Duc de Reichstadt

(Last phase)

were blown away!" wrote Foresti to Dietrichstein.

During the night of 23rd-24th July, the body was taken from Schönbrunn to Vienna.

Marie Louise had already returned to Parma.

Baroness Sturmfeder relates in her diary: "The body was blessed, in all stillness, early in the evening. People moved noiselessly about; orders were given in a whisper. In spite of all that was going on, there reigned an almost ominous silence in the castle. As the turret clock struck nine, I saw the clergy, in their long robes, move towards his apartment, with wax tapers in their hands. Nothing broke the silence until the large doors were opened, and the priests went back to the chapel; then the coffin was brought out."

The castle square was crowded. A detachment of cavalry rode before and after the hearse, which was drawn by two mules. Soldiers and attendants were all that accompanied the prince on this first portion of the way.

The procession went slowly on to the capital in a dark night, lit up at intervals by vivid lightning.

"When I saw the body of the young prince, who had always treated us with kindness, carried away," said an old servant at the castle, "I felt more sorrow than since the day when the Emperor Napoleon made his entry into Schönbrunn as conqueror, and ordered me to show

him the rooms occupied by my master, Francis I. Here I kept guard at Napoleon's door, and here I fastened the door, and stood alone again, when his son's coffin was carried forth!"

## CHAPTER XXVI

Feeling in France on the News of the Death of the King of Rome—Was it a Natural Death ?—Last Days of Marie Louise—The Remains of the Emperor Napoleon taken to France—His Son's Coffin in Vienna

LIKE a shining meteor the King of Rome had passed over the French horizon. He had spent but a few years in the capital, but it was well known that he had never ceased to long for the land which ought to have been his, but which Napoleon's enemies did not consider his home. The French nation looked back with regret to the promise of his birth. Although it had not been granted him to carry out important plans, and although he had had no opportunity to lift a finger for the benefit of his fatherland, there was a possibility before him. We know that a strong party, increasing day by day, had looked forward to Napoleon II. for their future ruler.

The young leader, who should have rallied his father's adherents, was gone, and the nation felt that a very uncertain future loomed ahead.

The shop windows in Paris were filled with his likeness, draped in crape, and the poet Heine wrote in his "Reisebreve," 20th August 1832 :

"It is impossible to conceive the impression that young Napoleon's death has made upon

the lower classes of the people. I saw juvenile Republicans weeping! . . . I travelled along the northern coast, just as the news was spreading, and in every place I found the population in genuine sorrow. The beautiful Normandy women were especially distressed by the early death of the hero's son. The Emperor's likeness was to be seen in every cottage, always decorated with artificial flowers, like those of the saints in Holy Week. Many of the soldiers were wearing crape. One old Invalide held out his hand to me, remarking sorrowfully, 'Now everything is over!' "

Several plays, with the former King of Rome as hero, were acted in Paris, but one piece, with the title, *A vingt et un ans, ou L'Agonie à Schönbrunn,* moved the house to tears. Each time the rascal of the play advocated his death the audience shouted: "Abominable! Down with the Jesuits!" And a perfect storm of enthusiasm burst forth when the Emperor's son spoke of his devotion to his fatherland.

In Germany, as well as in France, numbers of treatises and poems were published, each one breathing sympathy with him.

But not one created a stronger impression than Victor Hugo's "Napoleon II.," which appeared a month after his death:

"Mil huit Cent onze!—O, temps où des peuples sans nombre
Attendaient, prosternés sons un nuage sombre,
Que le ciel eût dit oui!

Sentaient trembler sons eux les Etats centenaires,
Et regardaient entouré des tonnerres,
Comme un Mont Sinaï !

Courbés comme un cheval qui sent venir son maître,
Ils se disaient entre eux : ' Quelqu'un de grand va naître !
L'immense empire attend un héritier demain.
Qu'est-ce que le Seigneur va donner à cet homme
Qui, plus grand que César, plus grand même que Rome
Absorbe dans son sort le sort du genre humain ? '

Comme un aigle arrivé sur une haute cime,
Il cria tout joyeux avec un air sublime :
L'avenir ! L'avenir ! L'avenir est à moi !

. . . . . .

Non, l'avenir n'est à personne !
Sire ! l'avenir est à Dieu !
A chaque fois que l'heure sonne
Tout ici-bas nous dit adieu.

Demain, c'est le Cheval qui s'abat blanc d'écume,
Demain, ô, conquérant, c'est Moscou que s'allume,
La nuit comme un flambeau.
C'est votre vieille garde au loin jonchant la plaine.
Demain, c'est Waterloo ! demain c'est Sainte-Hélène !
Demain c'est le tombeau !

Tous deux sont morts—Seigneur votre droite est terrible !
Vous avez commencé par le maître invincible,
Par l'homme triomphant,
Puis vous avez enfin complété l'ossuaire :
Dix ans vous ont suffi pour filer le suaire
Du père et de l'enfant ! "

In many very different countries it was said, either openly or in veiled language, that the death of the Emperor's son had been hastened in Vienna. It was not only reported that the humiliating *rôle* he had been called upon to play had shortened his life, but rumour also said that he had been poisoned. In Germany

it was said that Louis Philippe had brought this about; in France it was ascribed to Metternich. The story was so abroad that the King of Bavaria, brother to the Empress of Austria, asked the Austrian ambassador:

"Did the Duke of Reichstadt die a natural death?"

The diplomatist, who was naturally unprepared for such allusions, gave the king clearly to understand that the question was a most irrelevant one!

To make up for his want of tact, the king continued:

"Do not misunderstand me! There are several parties in France who might have some interest in young Napoleon's death. I wonder if any attempt has been made to kill him from that point of view."

The accusations which were hurled against Francis I. and Metternich immediately after the decease of the Duke were carried further, and with increased ardour. It was said that an Italian dentist had been charged to give him a slow poison.

Even Malfatti did not escape suspicion, and it was also reported that Metternich had sent him a poisoned melon, through Prokesch.[1]

[1] The story that Napoleon's son was poisoned holds good, even in the present day. At late as 1897, a French writer, Audebrand, issued a pamphlet in which he expresses his belief that the Duke of Reichstadt was poisoned in Austria.

Two years after the death of the Duke of Reichstadt, and shortly before that of her father, Marie Louise married for the third time, and her husband, Charles de Bombelles, according to her own statement, was "as holy as he was lovable."

He was a Frenchman by birth, but had spent many years in Austria, his mother being Angélique de Mackau, who had been second governess to the children of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

After the death of Francis I. but little attention was paid to Marie Louise, on her rare visits to the capital, while hardly anybody thought of her as the ex-Empress of France.

She went to Vienna in 1847, feeling ill, and with a presentiment that it was the last time she would see her childhood's home and her relations. "Marie Louise has left Vienna with death in her heart; but she was in despair, and wept unceasingly," is an extract from the diary of Mélanie Metternich.

She developed inflammation of the lungs on her return to Parma; a few days later she resigned the government into the hands of her ministers, and looked at her will, made three years previously.[1]

[1] She referred again and again, in loving terms, to the son of her first marriage. His likeness and busts, with other items, were left to the Dowager Empress of Austria, to her brother, Archduke Francis Charles, and his wife, the

She died unconscious, and without pain, 7th December 1847.

The Italian union looked upon her decease as a pledge for brighter times. She was forgotten by all the other countries of Europe. Frenchmen recalled that she had been their Empress, but only to add, with bitterness, that she had not in the least contributed to glorify either the Empire or Napoleon.

If we think of the wars that raged during her childhood, of the cannonading at Wagram, hardly forgotten by the Viennese when she was sent to Paris, a few months subsequently; if we look back to the shadow which the fate of Marie Antoinette had cast over the house of Habsburg; and if we finally remember how young she was when Napoleon fell, and of the strong influence exercised over her by her father—we feel impelled to judge this irresponsible, weak-minded nature with leniency.

At the same time, every trace of indulgence vanishes when we contemplate her indifference to her son. She had no shadow of excuse for leaving him, or for renouncing his rights; nor

Archduchess Sophia. The cradle presented to the King of Rome by the city of Paris she left to Francis Joseph. Count Moritz Dietrichstein had his watch and chain; also a *bonbonnière* with his likeness, which she herself had constantly used. She also left souvenirs to Foresti, and many others who had been in her son's service. Immediately after this list, followed several mementoes for the Duchesse de Montebello.

for submitting to his bringing up by strangers, and losing both health and spirits, mainly for want of love, at the court of Austria. And least of all can we forgive and forget that she arrived so late at his death-bed, and then simply after being urged by strangers to go to him. As a mother she deserves the crushing judgment that contemporary and later days have passed on her. His last cry for help: "Mother! I'm sinking!" is bound, when we recall the lonely son, to resound, as an accusing voice, against this cold, absolutely self-centred Marie Louise.

. . . . . .

Napoleon's second wife was taken by surprise, when the whole of Europe resounded with his name nineteen years after his death.

The French people would have him back in his capital, and Louis Philippe sent his own son to St Helena, to bring his dust to Paris.

On 5th December 1840 the dead Napoleon made his entry into the capital—the long procession that passed under the triumphal arches, decorated with flowers and emblems, the crowded streets, where every head was bare, in spite of the intense cold, the remainder of the Old Guard following their master, full of enthusiasm in their recollection of the Emperor, who, in his day, hastened from city to city, from land to land.

As the coffin was carried into L'Hôtel des Invalides, the Prince de Joinville said to his

father: "Your Majesty! I bring you the body of Napoleon." When the king replied: "I receive it in the name of France."

Napoleon's sword was carried on a cushion. Louis Philippe took it up and gave it to General Bertrand, who had shared his captivity.

"General," he said, "I give you the charge to lay the Emperor's illustrious sword on his coffin."

All present were overcome, and old Moncey, Duke of Conegliano, who had defended the suburbs of Paris in 1814, exclaimed: "Now I can die."

. . . . . .

When Louis Napoleon became President of the French Republic, he requested the Imperial family in Vienna to give up the body of Napoleon II., which he desired to place by the side of Napoleon I. Arrangements were already made for its reception; there was to be holiday-making in every French town through which the coffin would pass, and circulars were issued representing his "home route."

In spite of the fact that room had not been found for Napoleon's son among the Habsburg Imperial family, Francis Joseph emphatically refused to remove his dust.

When Napoleon III. became Emperor he renewed the request, and his ministers besieged the Government in Vienna to accede to his wishes.

But the Emperor refused a second time, firmly insisting that in the Imperial vault at Vienna the deceased was among his own relations.

The most important souvenirs of the King of Rome's history are in Vienna. His cradle, the symbol of the hope of France, is in the Treasury; and among other mementoes of the Imperial house are the sceptre, the sword and the royal cap that Napoleon was wearing when he put upon his head the historical iron crown of Italy, and proudly said:

"God has given me this! Woe to him who will wrest it from me!"

During a recent exhibition in Vienna, a number of articles belonging to his son were on view: several likenesses from his childhood, the gold medal from the year of his birth; the first suit he wore in Austria—on which are fastened the ribbons of the Legion of Honour and of the Iron Crown—also the camp-bed on which he died.

His death mask is in the museum at Baden, near Vienna, placed side by side with that of Napoleon I., which Antomarchi brought from St Helena.

In this ghastly way Napoleon II. comes back to his father!

As the centenary of the birth of the King of Rome approached, France made yet a third attempt to have the "young eagle" in Paris. But the rigid will of Francis Joseph was proof

against this attempt too. Napoleon II. shall remain peacefully among his mother's kin ; in death, as in life, he shall be in the care of the house of Austria.

His modest coffin stands near his mother's, close to the Emperor Joseph's, and not far from Maria Theresa's, and that of Maria Carolina of Naples. A cross and plate are the only ornaments, and on the latter are engraved the following words, in Latin :—

" In everlasting remembrance of Joseph Franz Karl, son of Napoleon, Emperor of France, and Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria. Born in Paris, 20th March 1811, he received the title of King of Rome in his cradle.

" In the flower of his youth, endowed with gifts of mind and body, a striking appearance, noble and attractive features, unusual charm of manners, distinguished by his intelligence and military gifts, he was seized with rapid consumption, which ended in death, at the Imperial Castle of Schönbrunn, near Vienna, 22nd July 1832."

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" Correspondence de Napoléon."

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IMBERT DE SAINT-AMAND : " Marie Louise et le Duc de Reichstadt."

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" Mémoires de Bausset."

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